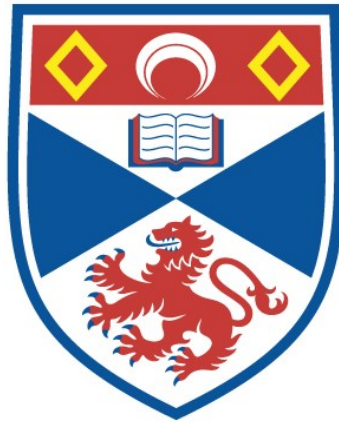


THE PFLP'S CHANGING ROLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Harold M. Cubert

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The PFLP's Changing Role in the Middle East

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Abstract

The PFLP represents a violent Marxist trend among Palestinian political organizations. It is uncompromisingly hostile toward Israel, the industrialized West and the West's regional allies, and rejects any settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict which does not entail both Israel's elimination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on all land it claims as Palestine. Until this occurs, the PFLP remains committed to armed conflict with its enemies.

This study attempts to explain the PFLP's lagging position within the Palestinian national movement by comparing its policies with Fatah's. Unlike the PFLP, Fatah's overriding concern was to establish a Palestinian authority on any portion of 'liberated land' and consider the question of Israel's existence later. Fatah's selection of supporters was never conditioned upon ideological compatibility. It formed coalitions with all interested parties and accepted assistance from all willing providers. Most importantly, Fatah - as the PLO's dominant faction - transformed itself from an underground group to a quasi-government with diplomatic status and later, to leadership of the PNA in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Fatah's flexibility enabled it to survive regional and global changes. In the unipolar international order which followed the Soviet bloc's collapse in 1991, the PLO courted the United States and its allies, participated in the Arab-Israeli peace process, and was rewarded with authority over part of the Palestinian 'homeland'. The PFLP, spurning change, refused to

act likewise. From its Damascus headquarters, it can currently do nothing without the Syrian government's approval and Syria, on the verge of a peace agreement with Israel, is unlikely to allow its protege to do more than issue statements. Only an imaginative and bold move by the PFLP, at this point, can restore the organization's prestige among its constituents and notoriety among its enemies.

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The PFLP's Changing Role in the Middle East

List of Abbreviations

AHC	Arab Higher Committee
ALA	Arab Liberation Army
ALF	Arab Liberation Front
ANM	Arab Nationalists Movement
APF	Alliance of Palestinian Forces
ARAMCO	Arab-American Oil Company
AUB	American University of Beirut
BNLF	Bahraini National Liberation Front
DFLP	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
DOP	Declaration of Principles
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
Kata'ib	al-Kata'ib al-Fida' al-'Arabi
LNRF	Lebanese National Resistance Front
PDFLP	Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PDRY	People's Democratic Republic of Yemen
PFB	Popular Front in Bahrain
PFLO	Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PFLP-GC	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command
PLA	Palestinian Liberation Army
PLF	Palestinian Liberation Front
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
PNC	Palestinian National Council

PNF	Palestine National Fund
PNLA	Palestinian National Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSF	Popular Struggle Front
TAPLINE	Trans-Arabian Pipeline
TMC	Technical Military Committee
UAR	United Arab Republic
UNL	United National Leadership of the Uprising

Introduction: Overview of the PFLP's Ideology and Aims

Although the priorities of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) - and its predecessor, the Arab Nationalists Movement (ANM) - have shifted with every major international and Middle Eastern political realignment, its fundamental aim of eliminating Israel and replacing it with a Palestinian state has remained constant throughout its history. What have changed over time are the focus of its activities, the alliances which it has formed with other organizations and governments, and the time limits which it has set for achieving its aims.

The PFLP is a secular nationalist organization which seeks to set up a Palestinian state on territory which is currently under Israel's sovereignty or administrative control. This territory, which, between 1917 and 1948, was governed under a British Mandate, should have - in the PFLP's view - been turned over to a Palestinian Arab government in 1948, but was instead unjustly transferred to Zionist control. This eventually resulted in Israel's establishment and the dispersal of most of the territory's Arab inhabitants to the neighboring countries and beyond. The PFLP seeks to restore what it considers stolen territory to Palestinian sovereignty, dismantle the State of Israel, bring about the return of the Palestinian diaspora to its homeland, and establish a 'secular democratic state' in Israel's place.

This is the PFLP's core aim and Israel is its principal adversary. However, the PFLP has also identified its ancillary foes; that is, countries which it believes facilitated Israel's establishment and continue to ensure the Jewish state's survival through military and economic aid. The United States is the chief target in this category, due primarily to what the PFLP regards as its unconditional support for Israel and the vast amounts of American military and economic aid which Israel receives annually.

Included in this category, but guilty to a lesser degree, are Britain and other Western European nations such as France and Germany, all of whom the PFLP blames for having provided the Zionist movement - and later Israel - with political, military, or economic support. The PFLP holds Britain, for example, responsible for having legitimized the Zionist presence in Palestine in the 1917 Balfour Declaration. This document implied, among other things, British support for the eventual establishment there of a Jewish state. The PFLP blames both Britain and France for having supplied Israel with sophisticated weaponry from the early 1950's until the 1967 Six Day War and vilifies Britain, France, and Germany for their maintenance of close economic links with Israel to the present day.

The PFLP explains Israel's close links with the United States and Western Europe by Israel's purported function as a proxy through which they protect their economic and political interests in the region from being undermined by Arab nationalist

movements. It regards Israel as a source of intelligence on these political movements for the United States and its allies; a surrogate military force which can attack or threaten countries or organizations which oppose western aims, and a potential staging area for direct military intervention.

The United States and its allies do indeed have vital economic interests in the Middle East - chief among which is maintaining a steady flow of the region's crude petroleum resources, upon which they depend to provide electrical power and automotive fuel for their public and industrial needs. Without petroleum, their economies would collapse and their way of life would change dramatically. The western alliance also has a political interest in supporting and protecting the Arab nations from which it purchases petroleum and whose citizens constitute a fertile market for its industrial exports.

The rulers of the petroleum-producing Arab countries have a reciprocal economic interest in maintaining a close relationship with the United States and its allies; a relationship through which they have accumulated vast amounts in petroleum revenues. The PFLP claims that these profits go directly to the local rulers' personal bank accounts at the expense of the general population's well-being. Guided by Marxist economic theory, it asserts that the western industrialized nations purchase crude petroleum from weak, economically-dependent Arab countries at unnaturally low prices, and use it to produce consumer goods - which they resell to these countries at enormous profit. The

Gulf oil-producing nations' close economic association with the United States and its allies (and, indirectly, Israel), consequently, renders them no less threatening an adversary for the PFLP than the Western nations from whom Israel receives military and economic support.

The PFLP's strategic goals during the course of its history have been: 1) to deprive Israel of its supporters by directly overthrowing, or causing the overthrow of pro-western Arab governments, upon whom the United States and its allies - Israel's principal backers - depend for a steady supply of crude oil. This would weaken the western nations' economies and thereby reduce the amount of financial and military aid which Israel would receive from them; 2) to carry out armed attacks against Western and Israeli targets worldwide, in order to draw attention to the Palestinian cause; and 3) to mount armed attacks against targets inside Israel itself, in order to demoralize Israel's citizens and government.

Ambitious though this program may be, the PFLP realizes that its success requires both popular and external backing. In its search for the most dependable source of popular support for its activities, the PFLP has employed the Maoist analytical technique of classifying the elements of every society in which it operates and determining the usefulness or detriment of each grouping to the Palestinian cause. The ruling wealthy upper classes, in the PFLP's view, clearly have the most to gain from their relationship with the Western nations since it is with these

classes that the industrialized governments must deal in order to obtain the Arab world's petroleum resources cheaply.

Consequently, the PFLP sees little chance of a successful alliance with these strata and, in fact, regards them as a danger to its cause.

Instead, the PFLP looks to the working and middle classes for support (to which it refers, respectively, as the proletariat and the petite bourgeoisie). The PFLP believes that the proletariat's anger against exploitation by the upper classes can be successfully channeled into revolutionary activity. It believes that this activity will culminate in the overthrow of the current pro-western regimes and their replacement by governments inclined to take a strong stand against the regional initiatives of the United States and its allies, and that these governments will act in the 'true interests' of their constituents.

Theoretically, the PFLP views members of the working class as the ideal leaders of its social and political revolution because their downtrodden condition leaves them with the least to lose in their current state and most to gain from the overthrow of the upper classes. They are, therefore, the most likely to carry the revolution through to a successful conclusion. For the time being, however, the PFLP believes that they lack the education and skills required to conduct such an effort and must temporarily accept the guidance of the sympathetic intellectuals and professionals of the petite bourgeoisie. It is this class'

task to prepare the members of the proletariat to eventually assume their leadership role.

Organizing its members into cells of three or four people, and grouping them into a pyramidal hierarchical structure, the PFLP operates in a particular area by rallying the general population, or the 'masses', to popular action against the government. The cell members may also carry out both armed and unarmed operations in their particular sector.

In attempting to implement its program, the PFLP has traditionally relied on both superpower and regional patrons to supply it with financial and military assistance, as well as training and logistical backing. Its parent organization, the ANM, depended upon the Egyptian government, under President Gamal 'abd al-Nasir, for training, funding, and logistical support of its operations in various Middle Eastern countries. Following the PFLP's establishment in December 1967, it developed strong ties with the People's Republic of China (PRC), the former Soviet Union and - at various times - with regional powers such as Syria, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), Libya, and Iraq. It also forged links with like-minded subversive organizations in western and pro-western nations around the world.

Theoretically, these links were to have provided the PFLP with the same international support mechanism which made Israel appear so invulnerable. However, while Israel's ties with the United States and its allies remain as strong as ever, the PFLP's

allies have either ceased to exist, lost interest in actively supporting the Palestinian cause, or turned downright hostile.

This dissertation will examine the development of the PFLP's ideology and political program over the years of its existence - beginning with the establishment of its predecessor, the ANM - to the present. It will contend that the PFLP's program has failed, so far, due to its imperfect assessment of the reasons for popular hostility to the West. For while this hostility exists, it is generally in response to the threat which the inundation of western culture into the region is said to pose to indigenous Islamic values, rather than the alleged economic exploitation of the region's rank-and-file inhabitants. Indeed, the anti-western Islamic movements have embraced the economic benefits resulting from petroleum exports to the United States and its allies (the Islamic fundamentalist government of Iran, for example, favors expanded trade with Europe and the pro-western Persian Gulf states¹), while struggling vigorously against what it considers a western cultural invasion. This trend has made irrelevant the appeals of the PFLP and its allies for economic class warfare, while calls by the Islamic organizations for the preservation of the area's cultural and religious identity have been well-received.

This dissertation will further contend that the PFLP was able to pursue its program only as long as it received support

¹ H.C. Metz, Iran: A Country Study, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 1989), pp. 187-189.

from superpowers such as the Soviet Union and from regional powers such as PDRY and Syria. When that support diminished or ceased altogether in the late 1980's and early 1990's, the PFLP was forced to seek out new sponsors and allies.

Its search intensified as the end of 1991 approached, with the start of the Madrid Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, during which Israel, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and an 'unofficial' Palestinian delegation faced each other in direct talks geared towards eventual peace treaties. Because of Israeli opposition to its participation, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)² had been excluded. It was apparent, though, that the Palestinian delegation's positions and negotiating strategy were being formulated behind the scenes by the PLO.

Even the PLO's indirect involvement in peace negotiations with Israel, its sworn enemy, was sufficiently worrisome to the PFLP to prompt it to develop contacts with Islamic fundamentalist groups linked to Iran, such as the Palestinian organization Hamas and the Lebanon-based Hizbullah. This would have been unthinkable for the avowedly Marxist PFLP during the 1970's and 1980's, when it had received Soviet support. The PLO's agreement with Israel in September 1993, and the direct negotiations which followed, further isolated the PFLP from the umbrella organization and led it to conclude a formal alliance with the Iranian-backed groups. This alliance was aimed at impeding

² The PLO claims to be Palestinian national movement's umbrella organization, of which the PFLP - at the time - was an active member.

progress toward a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

In attempting to explain the apparent failure of the PFLP's agenda to take root in Middle East politics, this study will trace the organization's ideological and political development from its ANM incarnation in the 1950's and early 1960's until the PFLP's establishment in 1967, and from the founding of the PFLP through its present crisis. It will focus, in particular, on the differences between the approaches of the PFLP and its more successful rival, Fatah, to resolving the Arab-Israeli dispute, contending that Fatah's ideological and operational flexibility have enabled it to become the Palestinian national movement's dominant organization while the PFLP has been marginalized from the mainstream by its rigid devotion to ideology.

Chapter One will review the historical events and ideological trends which preceded the emergence of the leaders who would eventually form the PFLP. Chapter Two will trace the history of the Palestinian national movement from its beginnings in the late nineteenth century to the present. Chapter Three will examine the PFLP's ideology, structure, and method of operation. Chapter Four will assess the PFLP's changing relationship with the PLO over the years. Chapter Five will present conclusions by examining the extent to which the PFLP has fulfilled its ideological goals, evaluate its current problems, and speculate on the possible future directions which the organization might take.

Part One: Historical and Ideological Background

Since its establishment at the end of 1967, the PFLP has been the subject of numerous books and articles, perhaps more frequently than any of the PLO's other constituent groups. Most of these works, whether by scholars or journalists, emphasize: 1) the organization's consistent uncompromising rejection of Israel's right to exist; 2) its insistence on Israel's total dismemberment; 3) its insistence on the transfer to Palestinian sovereignty of all land over which Israel currently exercises control; 4) its emphasis on armed violence - against both civilians and military personnel - as the primary means to achieve these aims; and 5) its international and regional links with like-minded groups.

These characteristics, however, typify many other Palestinian nationalist organizations - both secular and religious. What had distinguished the PFLP from its peers had been its attempt, until recently, to operate within the framework of an increasingly moderate Fatah-dominated PLO, while simultaneously adhering to its longstanding ideological principles. PFLP offshoots such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command (PFLP-GC) and certain Fatah progeny (Fatah - the Revolutionary Council and Fatah - the Uprising) had always functioned independently of the PLO and never made any pretensions of accepting its authority.

The PFLP, until the signing of the September 1993 PLO-Israeli peace accord (under which the two entities, among other

things, recognized one another), erratically maintained at least a symbolic presence on the umbrella organization's Executive Committee and participated in meetings of the Palestinian National Council (PNC). Despite its serious disagreements with Fatah's leader, Yasir 'Arafat, the PFLP had always believed in the importance of maintaining at least the appearance of unity among the Palestinian national movement's various groups and consequently, made an effort to cooperate with the PLO's dominant faction whenever possible. In cases where the Palestinian organizations faced common danger - such as Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon - the PFLP cooperated very closely with the other groups, particularly Fatah. In cases where Fatah diverged from what the PFLP considered fundamental nationalist principles - such as the PLO's recognition of Israel in September 1993 - the latter detached itself completely from the 'Arafat's organization, claiming that it had ceased to be the 'true' PLO and required basic reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Until the signing of the Israel-PLO agreement in 1993, the PFLP was unique among Palestinian organizations for its ability to maintain a rigidly maximalist hostility towards Israel and the West, while concurrently preserving a tenuous working relationship with the more pragmatic Fatah. Given the sharp contrast between the approaches of the two organizations, it is a wonder that their relationship lasted as long for as it did. The PFLP leadership's strict ideological approach to the Arab-Israeli conflict, however, can be readily explained through an

examination of the historical events and ideological trends by which they were influenced. This chapter will trace these developments from the advent of Islam through the formative years of the PFLP's founders. It will focus, in particular, on the interaction between the region's inhabitants and the West, as well as this interaction's effect on the development of the Arab and Palestinian nationalist movements.

Chapter 1: Islam as the Basis for Arab Nationalism

Islam's appearance in the seventh century A.D., and the subsequent conquests within what is now the Middle East, North Africa, and the Indian subcontinent by the Prophet Muhammad and his successors is responsible for the spread of Arabic language and culture throughout these regions. Hourani describes Islam's first three centuries as:

a compelling drama in three acts: the early days of the Prophet and his immediate successors, the golden age when the umma [Islamic community of believers] was what it should be; the Umayyad period when the principles of the Islamic polity were overlaid by the natural human tendency towards secular kingship; and the early 'Abbasid age when the principles of the umma were reasserted and embodied in the institutions of a universal empire, regulated by law, based on the equality of all believers, and enjoying the power, wealth, and culture which are the reward of obedience.³

³ A. Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1939 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) (hereinafter, "Hourani, Arabic Thought"), p. 7. Hourani's Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798-1939, together with M. Khadduri's Political Trends in the Arab World, T. Sonn's Between Our'an and Crown: The Challenge of Political Legitimacy in the Arab World, and S. Haim's Arab Nationalism: An Anthology survey the ideologies embodied in this response and the intellectuals who developed them. They document, as well, the evolution of the manner in which the Arabs defined themselves. The Arabs were transformed, in the minds of their intellectual elite, from an Islamic community whose political actions were meant to further religious ends - and whose members regarded themselves as Muslims with a common language, culture, and history - to an Arab nation, bound by these three elements, for whom Islam was a vital, but by no means the defining component of its national consciousness. See also A. Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991) (hereinafter "Hourani, History of the Arab Peoples"), p. 4. Hourani's A History of the Arab Peoples traces the Arabs' development, both as a nation and as a cultural and ethnic group, from pre-Islamic times to the present day. Beginning with the birth of Islam, he discusses its unifying effect on the then mostly tribal Arab society, which was at first confined primarily to the Arabian

(continued...)

³(...continued)

Peninsula. Islam, he contends, was to convert an amalgam of warring Arab clans into an empire - extending, at its height, from the Indian Subcontinent to the Iberian Peninsula, whose subjects were united by a common language, culture, and religion. Although this empire eventually split into twenty-two separate Arab-ruled entities (in addition to Christian Spain and Portugal, and Islamic - but non-Arab - Iran, Pakistan, and parts of India) whose political alliances seemed to shift with every passing day, a certain cultural and linguistic stability remained over the years:

A world where a family from southern Arabia could move to Spain, and after six centuries return nearer to its place of origin and still find itself in familiar surroundings, had a unity which transcended divisions of time and space; the Arabic language could still open the door to office and influence throughout that world; a body of knowledge transmitted over the centuries by a known chain of teachers, preserved a moral community even when rulers changed; places of pilgrimage, Mecca and Jerusalem, were unchanging poles of the human world even if power shifted from one city to another; and belief in a God who created and sustained the world could give meaning to the blows of fate [p. 4].

The Ottoman Empire, based in present-day Turkey, brought the Islamic polity to the zenith of its political influence and military power, extending its boundaries into the Balkans and Central Asia, its armies eventually reaching the outskirts of Vienna in 1683. By the late eighteenth century, however, the major European powers shifted from a policy of static defense against Ottoman encroachments to an offensive strategy whereby they gradually extended their influence over the Ottoman territorial domains themselves, often competing with local authority in the region's political and commercial affairs, and eventually dominating them.

In a gradual process, which will be described later on in greater detail, the European powers - Britain, France, and Russia in particular - nibbled away at the Ottoman Empire both physically and economically, conquering areas previously under Ottoman control (Crimea and parts of Central Asia by Russia between 1768 and 1774, the creation of independent states in the Balkans through local revolutions in the late nineteenth century, Britain's occupation of Aden in 1839, and Egypt in 1882, and France's occupation of Algiers in 1830) and extracting economic concessions from the Ottoman authorities. These concessions allowed the former to exercise indirect control over local

(continued...)

Although the circumstances described above no longer prevailed by the time the Ottoman rulers reached the height of their power in the sixteenth century, it was this image of a unified Islamic entity - which they believed capable of withstanding foreign (non-Arab) interference - to which early Arab nationalists looked as a model on which their dream of the unified modern Arab state might be based.

A solid grasp of the Arab nationalists' views, faithfully described in the three works introduced above, is vital to understanding the ideology under which the leadership of the ANM - and later the PFLP - operated. Dr. George Habash, founder and leader of the ANM, and Secretary General of the PFLP since its inception, was profoundly influenced by the ideas of Qustantin Zuraïq and Sati' al-Husri - two prominent Arab nationalists of the 1940's and 1950's.⁴ The PFLP's doctrine, summarized at the

³(...continued)

commerce and secure for Europeans the right to travel and trade freely within Ottoman territory.

Hourani's portrayal of the relationship between the Western powers and the provinces under Ottoman control as one in which the former enjoyed clear economic and political advantage and exploited this advantage to the latter's detriment corresponds to the PFLP's description of this association summarized earlier. It was this imbalance of forces which prompted local intellectuals to consider developing an appropriate response to what they considered an economic and cultural invasion of their region.

⁴ F. Matar, Hakim al-Thawrah: Qissah al-Hayah al-Duktur Jurj Habash [Sage of the Revolution: The Life Story of Dr. George Habash] (London: Highlight Publications, 1984) (hereinafter "Matar"), pp. 31-32. This series of interviews by Lebanese journalist Fu'ad Matar is perhaps the most authoritative first-person account of the ANM's activities during the 1950's and
(continued...)

beginning of this thesis - and outlined in detail in chapter three - is a synthesis of the views of these nationalists with the conclusions drawn by the PFLP from contemporary circumstances. Those whose ideas contributed to PFLP doctrine, in turn, derived their positions from their own mentors and environments. An ideological genealogy, therefore, can be traced from the first thinkers to challenge the Ottoman system's legitimacy during the latter half of the nineteenth century to those upon whose ideas ANM and PFLP doctrine is immediately based.

Arab nationalism rose out of the need to confront the extension of European influence to the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, and North Africa, in light of the Ottoman authorities' apparent inability to do so. Arab nationalists and reformers regarded the Ottoman view of Islam's role in daily life as antiquated and pointed to the Empire's virtual self-dismemberment - and its government's tendency to yield to almost all European demands - as proof that radical change in the manner in which Arabs viewed themselves and their collective purpose was necessary.

⁴(...continued)
1960's. It confirms many of W. Kazziha and Basil al-Kubaisi's assertions and claims on the ANM's behalf (see below) for having established and guided anti-western organizations all over the Middle East and North Africa.

A. Abbasid Caliphate's Loss of Arab Character in the 9th Century: Turkish Provincial Governors Assume Political Control

The apparatus governing the unified Islamic polity in North Africa and the Middle East began to lose its exclusively Arab character in the ninth century, when the Turkish mercenary troops upon whom the 'Abbasid rulers had come to rely accumulated ever greater influence over policy-making and administrative issues. The mercenaries exercised this influence to such an extent that they were able to depose caliphs of whom they disapproved. The caliphate in Baghdad found itself increasingly unable to assert its authority in the empire's remote provinces - whose Turkish governors recognized the caliph's religious authority, but reserved political power for themselves.⁵

The caliph's authority was dealt a fatal blow following Baghdad's destruction in the mid-thirteenth century and the final transfer of political authority to the Mamluk sultans in Egypt, where the caliph existed as a mere figurehead. Separate states sprang up, in the wake of Baghdad's ruin, in which power was concentrated in the hands of ". . . a military group, central Asian, Turkish, Kurdish, or Caucasian by origin - the sultan, his freedmen, and their dependents." This group's primary concern was the seizure and maintenance of power and to this end, it took

⁵ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 10. See also Hourani, History of the Arab Peoples, pp. 35-36.

pains to retain control over the armed forces and government officials.⁶

Laws which related to state interests were based on proclamations issued by the sultan, who held temporal power. The caliph served as a respected religious advisor with whom the sultan consulted on whether or not his actions were in accord with Islamic law. It was the caliph who nominally invested the sultan with the authority to rule and it was from this investiture that the sultan's government derived its legitimacy.⁷

B. Ottoman Empire Established in 14th Century: Turks Form Ruling Class

The group which formed the ruling class, at the time of the Ottoman Empire's establishment in the fourteenth century,⁸ was composed of Muslim Turks who had - and whose forebears had - served in the armed forces of the early sultans. As the empire expanded, leading members of this martial class were given the right to collect and retain tax revenues from the areas which they had been assigned to rule in exchange for military service to the sultan. These regional chieftains, transformed from soldiers to landowners, decayed as a military force. As their charters lapsed, they were replaced by tax-farmers, who became an

⁶ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 11. See also T. Sonn, Between Our'an and Crown: The Challenge of Political Legitimacy in the Arab World (Oxford: Westview Press, 1990) (hereinafter "Sonn"), pp. 61-63.

⁷ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 11. See also Sonn, p. 63.

⁸ Sonn, p. 61.

hereditary landholding class; and although members of this class were granted the authority to rule, they were given no intrinsic power.⁹

The military caste which replaced it was composed of members of the slave-corps, a group which had served in the army since Islam's earliest days. The slaves had originated in the Balkans and the Caucasus Mountains. They had either been bought or acquired through periodic levy and educated in the military or palace schools. They eventually became either commanders in the sultan's army or high officials in his government.¹⁰

C. The Ottoman Legal System

Although the sultan did not claim to be a caliph in the same sense that the Prophet Muhammad's immediate successors were caliphs, he nevertheless based his religious authority ". . . on the divine right of those who had established their effective power and used it in the interests of Islam."¹¹ All of the sultan's acts and proclamations were officially subject to the Sunni interpretation of the shari'ah, or the Islamic legal code.¹² He was additionally responsible for protecting the

⁹ Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 25-26. See also Sonn, pp. 67-68.

¹⁰ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 26. See Sonn, p. 66.

¹¹ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 27. See also Hourani, History of the Arab Peoples, p. 221.

¹² According to Sonn, the Ottoman rulers, rather than consulting the shari'ah to ensure that their acts comported with its provisions, ". . . elicited legal justifications (fetva; in Arabic, fatwa) from the religious scholars for their actions." p. 62.

Islamic holy places and defending Ottoman frontiers against the Christian and Shi'i states.¹³

Under the sultan was a religious legal hierarchy headed by the chief interpreter of Islamic law, al-shaikh al-Islam, who was empowered to disapprove of government actions for being contrary to the law. In practical terms however, the sultan held final authority. Under the Ottoman legal system, it was the task of the judges (qadis) to dispense the law. At the next lower level, the jurisconsults (muftis) interpreted the law, while instructors taught it in schools. Together with mosque officials, these elements formed ". . . an official corps, with regular grades and a system of promotion . . . ", which served as a communications channel between the sultan and his subjects. It was through this hierarchy that the sultan issued his decrees and through it that the rank-and-file expressed their grievances to him.¹⁴

D. The Role of Minority Religious Communities

The sultan did not attempt to impose a homogeneous belief system on his subjects, but rather, regulated the empire's various elements and classes in such a way as to ensure harmonious coexistence among them. They formed a collection of communities, whose members owed immediate loyalty to their leaders, who, in turn, were responsible to the central

¹³ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 27. See also Sonn, pp. 62-63.

¹⁴ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 28. See also Hourani, History of the Arab Peoples, pp. 224-225.

government. These communities were divided along regional, religious, or functional lines, and often all three.¹⁵

Communities of the empire's recognized religious minorities (Christians and Jews) were organized into the millet system, under which they were subject to Ottoman jurisdiction in civil legal matters, but were permitted to administer their own court system in family law concerns.¹⁶ In exchange, they owed the sultan loyalty and good behavior, and were required to pay personal taxes (jiziyah) not demanded of their Muslim counterparts.¹⁷

The empire's Christian communities would play a dual role in the region's historical development from the sixteenth century onwards; first, as the willing absorbers of European languages and cultural values, and later, as leading elements in the revival of Arabic as a means of popular expression and ideologues of the Arab nationalist movement. Although both the Christian and Jewish communities felt alienated in a predominantly Muslim society, each responded differently to their respective feelings of isolation. Jews felt both religiously and culturally estranged, since a significant portion of Jewish doctrine maintained that they were a community in exile and aspired to the

¹⁵ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 29.

¹⁶ Sonn, p. 78.

¹⁷ Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, p. 217. See also E. Mortimer, Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), p. 127. Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam is a survey of modern Islamic trends (nineteenth century and beyond), which also reviews Islam's early history.

re-establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in the Land of Israel.

Christians, on the other hand, considered themselves Arabs culturally, speaking Arabic as their primary language and practicing Arab customs in much the same way as their Muslim neighbors. Their existence as a separate community within Ottoman society led them to look to the West for protection and guidance. In the twelfth century, the Maronite Christians of Lebanon adopted Roman Catholicism and accepted papal authority.¹⁸ By the late sixteenth century, the Catholic Church had established a number of colleges in Rome to train Arab Christian priests for service in the Levant.¹⁹

¹⁸ Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, p. 97. See also Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 55.

¹⁹ Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, p. 242. Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 55-56.

Chapter 2: Western Incursions; Ottoman Concessions

The Ottoman government's efforts to bring parts of Europe under its control paved the way for European political incursions into the empire. Sultan Sulaiman, whose siege of Vienna had been repulsed in 1529, was keen on preventing the Hapsburg dynasty from regaining control of the European areas under his authority. For this reason, he entered into an alliance with France in 1535. In concluding the alliance, Sulaiman agreed to grant France trading privileges within his domain, among them semi-autonomous status for the communities which they established in Syria. He granted similar privileges to British merchants in 1580. While this move was intended to encourage foreign commerce, it instead weakened the sultan's image as a devout Islamic ruler. France was a Catholic nation and the privileges granted to its merchants were seen as a "... concession to their religion rather than their nationality."²⁰

A. Ottoman Sultanate Faces Physical Threat From Russians and Venetians; Seeks English and Dutch Protection

The sultanate was forced into further concessions to certain European powers during the seventeenth century, when, for the first time, its 'home' territory faced physical threat from that quarter. Russian forces began to attack Ottoman positions on the empire's northeastern frontier and in 1625, raided the Ottoman capital, Istanbul. The Venetian fleet expanded its operations into the Mediterranean Sea - previously considered an 'Ottoman

²⁰ Sonn, p. 65.

lake' - and contended with the Ottoman fleet for the position of dominant regional naval power. It was only after a costly struggle lasting more than twenty years that the Ottomans were able to halt Venetian expansion at the island of Crete. This was carried out with the aid of English and Dutch vessels, in exchange for which the Ottomans granted further concessions to British merchants operating on its territory. The Ottoman forces were no more successful in Europe, being driven back, for example, in a second attempt to take Vienna in 1683. By the end of the seventeenth century, Ottoman efforts at further conquest in Europe had ceased.²¹

B. Extends Trading Privileges to European Allies

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the commercial advantages granted to European traders by the Ottoman government began to have an effect on local society. Western exports to the region reduced the competitiveness of the indigenous industrial sector. Those who would normally have worked to develop this sector in the empire's Arab provinces found it more profitable to cooperate with the European commercial colonies and came to depend on them as a vital source of income, so much so, that they neglected to develop Arab industry to the point where it could compete with foreign trade.²²

²¹ Sonn, p. 68. See also Hourani, History of the Arab Peoples, pp. 258-262.

²² Sonn, p. 69.

By 1740, Sultan Mahmud further broadened the range of privileges extended to French visitors to the empire by allowing them to be subject to French, rather than Ottoman law. The French began to build textile factories in Syria. In addition, French, English, and later, American missionaries were permitted to establish schools in the region.²³ Key figures in the Arab nationalist movement would eventually receive their education at these institutions and gain exposure to Western political thought.

The Arab nationalist movement, however, would not draw public attention until the second half of the nineteenth century. Before Arabs could conceive of themselves as a nation, the legitimacy of the Ottoman government had to be challenged. The empire's Turkish rulers differed from their Arab subjects in both language and culture. Their only common link was adherence to Sunni Islam and it was the sultan's image as the guardian of Islam which justified his continued rule in the eyes of the populace.

C. Early Anti-Ottoman Revolts - First Challenges to Sultan's Legitimacy

This image was first tarnished in the early fourteenth century with the Ottoman government's initial capitulations to the (Christian) French; however, by the late seventeenth century, a movement had emerged in the Arabian Peninsula which, for the first time, directly and systematically attempted to undermine

²³ Sonn, p. 72. See also Hourani, History of the Arab Peoples, p. 303.

the sultan's image as Islam's mainstay. Its founder and spiritual leader, Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), was born into a family of religious scholars in the Najd region of what is today Saudi Arabia. Sent as a young man for religious training in Madinah, Basrah, and Damascus, he adopted the Hanbali interpretation of Islamic law.

The Hanbali school, founded in the ninth century by the Islamic jurist Muhammad Ibn Hanbal, rejects the concept of ijma', or interpretation of the qur'an and hadith²⁴ by consensus among the religious scholars ('ulama').²⁵ The Hanbali interpretation of the Quran is instead derived solely, and almost literally, from the hadith. It also rejects the notion that the qur'an was created by earthly means and emphasizes its divine inspiration.²⁶

'Abd al-Wahhab was guided by the teachings of the Hanbali jurist Taqi al-Din Ibn Taimiyyah (1263-1328), who maintained that

²⁴ The qur'an is "the book which contains the revelations Muhammad professed to have received from time to time, chiefly through the intervention of the angel Gabriel, which he delivered as a divine message to those around him." F.A. Klein, The Religion of Islam (London: Curzon Press, [original publication date unknown, paperback reprint published in 1985]) (hereinafter "Klein"), p. 2. It is ". . . a complete collection of the revelations of Muhammad . . ." Id., p. 18. Klein defines the hadith, "the second foundation of Islam" as "information, account narrative, story and record of the actions, doings and sayings of the Prophet [Muhammad], as recorded and handed down by tradition and which have become the rule of faith and practice of Muslims." Id., p. 24.

²⁵ R. Nyrop, et.al., Area Handbook for Saudi Arabia (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977) (hereinafter "Nyrop, Saudi Arabia"), p. 120.

²⁶ Id.

as long as a ruler imposed laws derived from God's commands which ensured the community's spiritual welfare, he should be obeyed. However, just as kings had a right to obedience, so should they obey God and enforce divine law. Ibn Taimiyyah pointed to the original caliphate as the ideal example of such a system, but bemoaned the fact that it had since split into several kingdoms. Nevertheless, original responsibility for compliance with Islamic law lay with the ruler.²⁷ This was not the case under the Ottoman system, where the 'ulama' existed to provide religious justification for the sultan's secular decrees.

By the time the Wahhabi movement appeared in the early eighteenth century, the Muslim inhabitants of the Arabian peninsula and southern Iraq had reverted to customs and practices which had either predated the time of Muhammad or of which the Prophet and his followers had disapproved. These customs and practices fell under the transgression of shirk - the ascription of divine or superhuman qualities to anyone other than God or practices and beliefs which denied God's basic nature. These included:

the visiting of saints and tombs and the veneration of trees and rocks. Forbidden bida [innovations] also included rendering improper honor to the Prophet Muhammad, including the custom of celebrating his birthday. Particularly forbidden was the invocation of the name of the Prophet or of saints in prayers in the hope that they would intercede with God.²⁸

²⁷ Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 18-19.

²⁸ Nyrop, Saudi Arabia, pp. 121-122. See also Klein, pp. 235-236.

Having observed these practices, 'Abd al-Wahhab was determined to reform what he regarded as Islam's corrupt state and set out ". . . to restore it to its early purity in conformity with the teachings of the Qur'an, the example of the Prophet and the practice of the Companions and early Muslims."²⁹ His views met with hostility in his home town of Uyainah and he fled with his family and possessions to the nearby village of Dariyyah, where, in 1744, he concluded a pact with its ruler, Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud. Under the pact, Ibn Sa'ud undertook to ". . . adopt, fight for, and propagate the Wahhabi doctrines and that in all conquered territories, the Al Sa'ud [the Sa'ud household] would hold political power and the Al Ash Shaykh [the household of 'Abd al-Wahhab] would hold religious power."³⁰ The interests of the two families became further enmeshed after 'Abd al-Wahhab married Ibn Sa'ud's daughter.³¹

Following Muhammad Ibn Sa'ud's death in 1765, his son 'Abd al-'Aziz took over and continued his father's efforts to extend Wahhabism's influence. By the time of 'Abd al-Wahhab's death in 1792, Al Sa'ud had extended its influence southward to the Rub' al-Khali (Empty Quarter). In 1801, the Wahhabis attacked the Tomb of Hussein in Karbalah (a site holy to Shi'i Islam), stripping it of its jeweled encasing and pillaging the

²⁹ Klein, p. 236.

³⁰ Nyrop, Saudi Arabia, p. 121.

³¹ Klein, p. 236.

surrounding area. When 'Abd al-'Aziz died in 1803, most of the Arabian Peninsula was under Wahhabi control.

In the years 1801 and 1805, Al Sa'ud took Mecca and Medinah, respectively, and cleansed them of ". . . anything perceived as a religious infraction", including the tombs of saints.³² The Ottoman government, whose control over the area had been tenuous in any case, had ignored previous requests of its governor in Baghdad to put down the Wahhabi insurrection. The loss of Islam's two holiest cities, however, compelled the government to take action to quash the rebellion. By ". . . challenging the accepted religious order the Wahhabis were challenging the very basis of the Ottoman claim to legitimacy."³³ In 1816, the sultan ordered his governor in Egypt, Muhammad 'Ali, to put down the Wahhabi revolt and the rebellion was finally contained in 1818.³⁴ The sultan's claim

³² Nyrop, Saudi Arabia, p. 25.

³³ Sonn, p. 75. Hourani writes that

. . . in the circumstances of his time, ['Abd al-Wahhab's] preaching was not only a call to repent, it was a challenge to the dominant social forces: on the one side to the revived strength of the Arab tribes, still living in ignorance of religion and the Shari'a, and on the other to the Ottoman Empire, which stood for Islamic orthodoxy not as the salaf [original Muslims] were supposed to have conceived it, but as it had developed over the centuries. Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab was really saying that the Islam the sultan protected was not the true Islam, and he was therefore implying that the sultan was not the true leader of the umma [religious community].

Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 37-38.

³⁴ Nyrop, Saudi Arabia, p. 27. See also Sonn, p. 76.

on his subjects' loyalty, however - at least on the basis of his religious authority - had been further eroded.

Parallel attempts to undermine the Ottoman government's religious jurisdiction were also being made by the European powers, as well. France's effort had the most lasting impact on the Arab nationalist trend by far, since it introduced Arab intellectuals to contemporary European ideas and technology and simultaneously presaged the end of their way of life if the Arabs were not brought into the modern world quickly. Since the Ottoman government had proven incapable of countering European advances with its own values and resources, the means had to be found to adopt those European ideas from which the Arab world would benefit, while preserving the region's cultural integrity.

D. The End of Ottoman Illusions: The Scramble to Modernize

In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte² invaded and occupied Egypt during his war with Britain for dominance in the Eastern Mediterranean. He continued his efforts, through 1799, to occupy the Levant as well, and it was only with British assistance that the Ottomans succeeded in driving out the French. While in Egypt, however, the French brought with them an entourage of scientists and scholars who willingly shared their knowledge with local intellectuals with whom they came in contact. According to the Islamic historian 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti:

[I]f any of the Muslims came to them in order to look round they did not prevent him from entering their most cherished places . . . and if they found in him any appetite or desire for knowledge they showed their friendship and love for him, and they would bring out all kinds of pictures and maps, and animals and birds

and plants, and histories of the ancients and of nations and tales of the prophets . . . I went to them often, and they showed me all that.³⁵

Although France's occupation of Egypt brought indigenous Arab intellectuals into contact with European science and culture, it also confirmed for them beyond all doubt the empire's inability to physically defend itself against the non-Muslim West. In response, the Ottoman government, having re-established itself in Egypt at the beginning of the nineteenth century, embarked upon a hurried - if belated - effort to catch-up with Europe technologically, militarily, and economically.

In this spirit, the Ottoman government in 1839 announced its intention to reorganize its administrative procedures along European lines: central governmental control and bureaucracy, the rule of law, and social equality. In practical terms, this meant that:

[o]fficials should be free from the fear of arbitrary execution and seizure of property; they should govern in accordance with regulations drafted by high officials meeting in council. The subjects should live under laws derived from principles of justice, and which enabled them to pursue their economic interests freely; the laws should recognize no difference between Muslims, Christian and Jewish Ottomans. New commercial laws would enable foreign merchants to trade and travel freely.³⁶

The efforts to implement this policy that followed were known as the tanzimat, derived from the Arabic word for order, and its

³⁵ 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, 'Aja'ib al-Athar fi al-Tarajim wa al-Akhbar (Cairo: 1965), Vol. 4, p. 285, quoted in Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, p. 266.

³⁶ Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, p. 272.

principles were applied locally in the Arab provinces of Egypt and Tunis.

The power vacuum left after the expulsion of the French from Egypt was filled by a Macedonian Turk named Muhammad 'Ali, who ruled from 1805 to 1848. Muhammad 'Ali's modernization program included the training of military officers, physicians, engineers, and government officials through missions to Europe and special schools established locally.³⁷

³⁷ Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, p. 273. See also Sonn, pp. 74, 78; L.C. Brown, International Politics and the Middle East: Old Rules, Dangerous Game (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984) (hereinafter "Brown"), p. 43. Brown, in addition to describing the events which contributed to the Ottoman Empire's downfall, presents a model of the characteristics which he believes were common among the national liberation movements in the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Certain elements of Brown's model are helpful in providing the reader with interesting insights into the development of the Arab and Palestinian nationalist movements.

First, according to Brown, the revolt's armed activity was generally preceded by a proto-nationalist cultural renaissance among the rebelling population. This renaissance usually entailed "... language reform, interest in vernacular literature, new literature adapting Romanticist themes, evoking a past 'golden age' of the specific 'national' group as the exemplar of what must be recaptured."; second, in addition to seeking independence from foreign rule, national liberation movements challenged the favored position of the traditional elites under the system being rebelled against. In the case of the Balkan rebellions, a largely Christian population sought to seize power from their rulers - the representatives of an Islamic state in which non-Muslims felt like second-class citizens; third, aware that the strength of their forces was insufficient, nationalist leaders sought the political, economic, and military support of the major European powers in their efforts to oust their Ottoman occupiers; fourth, in providing this support, the European powers made simultaneous, "but clearly separate and occasionally contradictory efforts" to force the Ottoman government to implement political and social policy changes; and fifth, final settlements to local conflicts were concluded among

(continued...)

Muhammad 'Ali used his power to eliminate tax farms and turn cotton into Egypt's primary export crop. Initially, he attempted to set up textile mills and other factories, but the local market's small size, the lack of indigenous technical skill, and the scarcity of generated power made this venture extremely difficult. Eventually, under pressure from European competition, Egypt's economy once again became agriculture-based, exporting raw materials to the industrialized nations and importing manufactured goods.³⁸

Similar reforms were undertaken in Tunis, leading to a proclamation of reform in 1857, which guaranteed ". . . security, civil liberty, regular taxation and conscription, the right of Jews and foreigners to own land and carry out all kinds of economic activity." In 1861, the Muslim world's first constitution was enacted - within whose limits the local ruler promised to govern - which envisioned a sixty-member council whose approval would be necessary for the enactment of laws.³⁹

The empire's new social and economic order favored merchants who engaged in commerce with Europe, which was steadily increasing. The merchants were in a position to regulate not only trade, but local agricultural production as well. With

³⁷ (...continued)
the European powers, rather than among the warring parties themselves, and then imposed upon the combatants [pp. 57-58].

³⁸ Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, p. 273.

³⁹ Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, p. 274. See also Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 64-65.

ready access to capital, they were able to advance it to local landowners and farmers, and consequently determine what sort of crops would be produced. After purchasing Egyptian cotton, for example, the merchants would process and export it as well.

The largest group of merchants were Europeans, who were familiar with the European market and had access to bank credit. Their indigenous commercial partners were members of the empire's formerly underprivileged minorities: Christians and Jews who possessed extensive knowledge of the local markets and who, with their knowledge of foreign languages, were in a favorable position to serve as intermediaries with the Europeans. By the middle of the nineteenth century, many of them had acquired foreign nationality and, consequently, the protection of European consulates and embassies. Some had even set up offices in major European commercial centers.⁴⁰

The final element contributing to the weakening of the Ottoman sultan's legitimacy in his subjects' eyes was found in the series of successful armed rebellions in the empire's predominantly Christian Balkan provinces during the nineteenth century. Beginning with the Serbian revolt in 1805,⁴¹ the process continued with the Greek rebellion in 1821,⁴² and the

⁴⁰ Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, p. 276.

⁴¹ The Serbs were granted autonomy in 1817 and complete independence in 1878. See Brown, pp. 45-46.

⁴² Greece was granted independence in 1830 after European intervention. See Brown, p. 333.

granting of autonomy to two Bulgarian provinces in 1885⁴³ and Crete in 1898.⁴⁴

These events had three important consequences for the region. Apart from undermining the Ottoman government's image as guardian of the Islamic domain against the Christian West's military and commercial onslaughts, they opened the door wider for further European intervention in the area's affairs and, for the first time, introduced the concept of secular cultural nationalism to the Muslim world - that is, a sense of community among people based on a common language, history, culture, and, in most cases, geographical location.

The Ottoman government's gradual loss of legitimacy as the leader of an Islamic community, the coming of secular nationalism to the Middle East, and its expression through rebellion against the established system were among the factors[†] which laid the groundwork for the Arab-speaking world's transformation from a theocracy to a conglomeration of nation-states sharing a common language and in most cases, a common culture and religion.

⁴³ Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, p. 280.

⁴⁴ Crete was incorporated into Greece in 1913. Id.

Chapter 3: Arab Nationalism: Issues and Programs

For the Arab nationalist idea to establish itself in the region, however, two important issues had to be addressed. Chief among these - simply stated - was the question of why Europe had bested the Ottoman Empire militarily, politically, and economically, or more importantly, what it was about the European nations which made them stronger than the communities and governments of the Arab/Muslim East. Its corollary was the question of what steps could be taken to close the qualitative gap between the two regions.

In an attempt to present an overview of the many solutions proposed, three 'generations' of social and political thinkers will be discussed; the generations here being not so much chronological as conceptual. The first generation (Tahtawi, Khair al-Din Pasha, and Bustani), was composed of functionaries in the Ottoman administration who had been trained in Europe and wished to reform the system internally, without implementing radical changes. The second generation (Afghani and 'Abduh) called for internal reforms as well, but rejected the notion that they could be implemented under an Ottoman administration and called for the formation of a unified, exclusively Arab-Muslim commonwealth. The third generation (among them Husri and Zuraiq), upon whose ideas Habash and his colleagues would base their program, emphasized Arab history, culture, and language over Islam as the means to unite the Arab world. They by no means minimized Islam's importance, but instead

depicted it as an inseparable component (rather than the sum-total) of the Arab historical and cultural legacy.

Their anti-western sentiments took on a more urgent tone, living as they did not only at a time when their native lands were being occupied and governed by European forces and officials, but also at a time when a non-Arab nationalist movement (Zionism) was successfully establishing a Jewish commonwealth in what was then Palestine, at the expense - in their view - of its Arab inhabitants. In the late 1940's and early 1950's, they imparted their doctrines to eager Palestinian students at the American University of Beirut (AUB). Many of those students went on to become leaders in the Palestinian national movement's radical wing - particularly the ANM and PFLP - and attempted to implement the theories which had inspired them.

A. The Quiet Internal Reformers: Tahtawi, Khair al-Din Pasha, and Bustani

Many of the Ottoman empire's internal reformers were officials who sought change their government's orientation while preserving its framework intact. The first of these, Rifa'a Badawi Rafi' al-Tahtawi (1801-1873), served from 1826 to 1831 in Paris as the spiritual leader of one of several Ottoman educational missions sent by Muhammad 'Ali to study European science and culture. During this time, Tahtawi studied and translated numerous French historical, philosophical, literary, geographical, and mathematical works and acquired an in-depth knowledge of the political system in France. Unlike his

ideological successors, Tahtawi's concern was with Egypt's revival as a nation, rather than with that of the Arab world as a whole. Upon his return to Egypt, he wrote a detailed description of the French political process, the most salient characteristic of which was, for him, the stress placed by France's system on justice and equality, which Tahtawi considered the ". . . foundation of civilization."⁴⁵

Tahtawi believed that Egypt could improve its economic and strategic standing by adopting a similar attitude and that this could be accomplished by acquiring the modern knowledge which Europe had to offer. He consoled those among his fellow Ottomans - whose pride would not allow them to acknowledge the superiority of certain aspects of European civilization over their own - by maintaining that, in any case, all western knowledge had originated with the Arabs.⁴⁶

At the time that Tahtawi was in Paris, nationalism had only recently been introduced into Europe under circumstances similar to those which the Ottoman empire was then experiencing. According to Tahtawi, the Europeans had recognized that while they shared a common Christian identity, there were clear linguistic, historical, and cultural differences among the French, Spanish, Germans, and English. The task of nationalism was to clarify the reasons for those differences, to encourage

⁴⁵ Sonn, pp. 88-89. See also Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 82.

⁴⁶ Sonn, p. 89. See also Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 75-76.

each differentiated group to consider itself a separate nation, and to instill a sense of national pride and a desire to improve the condition of its members.⁴⁷

Tahtawi similarly differentiated between Egyptians and Europeans. However, if Egyptians (and indeed, all Ottoman subjects) were not Europeans, then what were they? How should they identify themselves? While all native residents of the empire were considered Ottoman citizens, there were differences among them comparable to those among Europeans - particularly those which existed between speakers of Arabic and Turkish, as well as among those who lived in different parts of the empire. This self-definition, then, was unsatisfactory.

Muslims had hitherto identified with the ummah or community of believers. Tahtawi's exposure to such French political philosophers as Voltaire and Fenelon introduced him to the term l'amour de la patrie, which he translated into Arabic as hubb al-watan, or 'love of homeland'. Here, watan refers to a geographic separation from other homelands - a narrower associational concept than that of the ummah.⁴⁸ Citizens of the same homeland professing love for their country, then, had a moral obligation ". . . to work together to improve it and perfect its

⁴⁷ Sonn, p. 89.

⁴⁸ Sonn, p. 89.

organization in all that concerns its honour and greatness and wealth."⁴⁹

Tahtawi's identification with his Egyptian homeland, however, was consistent, in his view, with Islamic doctrine. Under Islam, Tahtawi maintains, society's purpose is to endeavor to establish maslahah, or social well-being. For him, these are " . . . the economic activities which lead to wealth and the improvement of conditions and contentment among the people as a whole."⁵⁰ In order for this endeavor to succeed, freedom and equality are essential. This cannot be limited solely to Muslims, since Islamic Egypt is not exclusively Muslim, but must also include Jews and Christians. Since Egypt's religious minorities are also required to contribute to the country's well-being, they should have full equality with Muslims.⁵¹

Like Tahtawi, Khair al-Din Pasha (c. 1820-1889) was an Ottoman official who acquired his ideas for internal reform as a result of a four-year sojourn in France. There he observed the workings of the French political system and attempted to apply them to his native environment. Khair al-Din believed that only his government's adoption of a system based on universal justice as well as the characteristics of European societies which made

⁴⁹ R.R. al-Tahtawi, Manahij al-Albab al-Misriyyah fi Mabahij al-Adab al-'Asriyyah [Egyptian Intellectual Methods in the Delights of Modern Literature] (Cairo: 1912) quoted in Hourani Arabic Thought, p. 79. See also Sonn, p. 90.

⁵⁰ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 77. See also Sonn, p. 90.

⁵¹ Sonn, p. 90. Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 80-81.

them strong would enable it to modernize itself and compete with the modern European governments that were currently attempting to weaken and dismember the Ottoman empire.

Khair al-Din was born in the Caucasus Mountains and received his education and political training in Istanbul. Upon completing his education, he was sent to serve in the army of Ahmed Bey of Tunis. In 1852, he was sent on a mission to Paris, where he was able to study French politics and society first hand.

Returning to Tunis, Khair al-Din was appointed Minister of the Marine and for the next six years, led the movement for constitutional reform. He was a member of the body which drafted Tunis' constitution in 1860, and during the same year, was appointed president of the Supreme Council. He spent his long government career attempting to forestall attempts by various European powers, particularly France, to occupy Tunisia. At first, he sought the help of the Ottoman sultan in Istanbul in 1859 to use his influence - together with that of the other major European powers - against French territorial ambitions by attempting to secure his recognition of the province as an autonomous entity linked with the empire. The sultan, however, was unwilling to offend France and Khair al-Din was unable to secure his recognition of Tunisia's special status. Efforts to ratify a constitution there failed as well.⁵²

⁵² Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 85. See also M. Khadduri, Political Trends in the Arab World: The Role of Ideas and Ideals (continued...)

For the remainder of his tenure in public service, however, Khair al-Din's efforts were primarily aimed at attempting to enlist the Ottoman government's support to counterbalance European influence in the area and at attempting to subject the Bey in Tunis to constitutional control. In 1873, he was appointed prime minister and held the position for four years, during which time he took steps to improve the efficiency of government administration, made urban improvements, founded a public library, and reformed the educational system to include the teaching of European languages and modern sciences. His attempts to limit the Bey's power, however, as well as those to limit European influence⁵³ in Tunis drew hostility from both quarters. In 1877, Ahmad Bey had accumulated enough power to force Khair al-Din out of office, putting an end to his career in Tunis.

After moving to Istanbul, Khair al-Din won the favor of Sultan Abdulhamid, who appointed him grand vezir at the end of 1878. Khair al-Din again found himself faced with the problems which had hounded him in Tunis: difficulties in his effort to limit the influence of the European powers and the sultan's

⁵² (...continued)

in Politics (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1970) (hereinafter "Khadduri"), p. 30.

⁵³ This he tried to accomplish by maintaining balanced relations with the European powers with interests in Tunisia: Britain, France, and Italy ". . . trying neither to make too many concessions to any of them nor to alienate [them] completely." In the end, he disappointed all of them. Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 86.

reluctance to share his power with other government bodies. After attempting to impose a program of political and economic reforms on the sultan in 1879, the sultan turned against Khair al-Din and deposed him. His career in public service at an end, Khair al-Din continued to live in retirement in Istanbul and died there in 1889.⁵⁴

Like Tahtawi, Khair al-Din Pasha believed that as far as the Ottoman empire was concerned, ". . . whatever is conducive to the welfare of the Islamic community and the development of its civilization, such as the expansion of the bounds of science and learning and the preparation of the paths which lead to wealth . . .", as long as they were in harmony with the spirit of Islamic law, should be adopted - notwithstanding that the ideas and practices assimilated might have originated in the West.⁵⁵ Like Tahtawi as well, Khair al-Din considered equal justice and limitation of the ruler's power over his subjects the fundamental prerequisites for the successful implementation of beneficial reforms. However, while Tahtawi concerned himself only with Egypt's situation, Khair al-Din's ideas were aimed at all Muslim states.

Khair al-Din firmly believed that absolute rulers tended to be corrupt and that unless his power was shared with other

⁵⁴ A. Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 86-87.

⁵⁵ Khair al-Din Pasha, Aqwam al-Masalik fi Ma'rifah Ahwal al-Mamalik [The Road Most Straight to Know the Conditions of the State [Hourani translation]] (Tunis: 1867-8) quoted in Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 88. See also Hourani, History of the Arab Peoples, p. 306.

governmental bodies, the ruler's corruption would continue unchecked. While it is theoretically possible for an absolute ruler to be righteous and honest, this is more by virtue of his innate goodness rather than of the political system's soundness. At the apex of Islamic civilization, the ruler's actions were limited by the shari'ah and he consulted with his advisors. For Khair al-Din, limitation of the sultan's influence by constitutional and parliamentary authority was entirely compatible with the Islamic administrative system at its most effective.⁵⁶

Tahtawi and Khair al-Din sought to modernize the Ottoman empire by attempting to integrate potentially beneficial European ideas with Islamic principals in order to make them palatable to the theocratic government which they served. They took for granted the notion that Ottoman society would be governed according to Islamic law. As long as this was the case, Christian Arabs, although theoretically equal to Muslims, could never feel thoroughly at home in a society which defined itself in religious terms.

Christian Arabs, having developed extensive commercial ties with Europe, and having been educated in mission schools, had no misgivings about assimilating Western ideas into their culture. Despite this, they considered themselves Arabs in every sense and, but for religious differences, were culturally and linguistically identical to their Muslim counterparts. As a

⁵⁶ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 89.

minority, however, Christian Arabs were aware that even within the reformed Islamic polity proposed by Tahtawi and Khair al-Din, their political and social status would never equal that of Muslims. The 1860 Lebanese civil war, during which members of the Christian community in Damascus were massacred by Muslims opposed to reform, reinforced their feeling of alienation, as well as their perception that ". . . religious loyalty was a dangerous basis for political life."⁵⁷

In order for Christians to be truly equal in Arab society, the focus of its identity would have to be shifted from religion to a common history, culture, and language. Islam, whose development spread Arab civilization throughout the Levant and North Africa, could not be ignored, of course, but it was thought that it should be seen in its proper light; neither as a guide for daily living nor as ". . . the basis for political life . . .",⁵⁸ but as an important phase of Arab historical development.

Christian Arabs, then, concentrated on the revival and development of these aspects of Arab civilization, seeking thereby, to ensure themselves a participatory status in their society equal to that of their Muslim peers. Taking the lead in this effort were Lebanese Maronite intellectuals whose influence was felt during the mid- to late-nineteenth century, and whose

⁵⁷ Hourani, A History of the Arab Peoples, p. 277. See also Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 97.

⁵⁸ Id.

primary contribution was the adaptation of the Arabic language for the propagation of modern ideas.

The most prominent among them was Butrus al-Bustani (1819-1883). Bustani was educated at the 'Ain Waraqah Maronite Catholic seminary in Lebanon, but later converted to Protestantism as a result of his association with American missionaries. He assisted them in the translation of an Arabic version of the Bible and taught at their schools until 1863. In that year, he founded the National School [al-Madrasah al-Wataniyyah], an institution whose curriculum was based, not on religious, but on national principles (the most important of which was that " . . . all who spoke Arabic, whether Christians or Muslims, are Arabs . . . "⁵⁹ and therefore deserve equal consideration within Arab society). The National School focused on the teaching of Arabic language and the modern sciences.

During the course of his efforts to revive Arabic as a modern language, Bustani compiled a dictionary and an encyclopedia, and edited a wide variety of periodicals, all of which, according to Hourani,

. . . contributed to the creation of modern Arabic expository prose, of a language true to its past in grammar and idiom, but made capable of expressing simply, precisely, and directly the concepts of modern thought. From the circle which gathered around him - his sons and relations, his friends and pupils - there

⁵⁹ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 100.

came the modern novel and drama in Arabic as well as modern Arabic journalism.⁶⁰

Unlike fellow Lebanese Christian intellectuals,⁶¹ Bustani's agenda transcended mere cultural revival and, like Tahtawi and Khair al-Din, he articulated what he considered the requirements for a modern Arab society capable of competing with the rest of the world. These were based, in part, on the acceptance by Arab society of western ideas and customs from which it might benefit; a selective assimilation, whereby these concepts would be absorbed or rejected on their own merits. Like Tahtawi and Khair al-Din, as well, Bustani saw no shame in borrowing European ideas. When Arab civilization was at its zenith, Europe had appropriated many aspects of its culture and knowledge and, as a result, had advanced and overtaken the Arab world. It was now the latter's turn to learn from Europe and resume its former leading position.⁶²

⁶⁰ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 100. See also Sonn, pp. 84-85; K. Abu al-Shabab, "Al-Qissah wa al-Riwayah wa al-Masrahiyyah fi Filastin (1900-1948) [The Narrative, Novel, and Theater in Palestine (1900-1948)]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 4 (Beirut: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1990) (hereinafter "Abu al-Shabab"), p. 129. The 1984 edition of the Palestinian Encyclopedia contains articles covering most aspects of Palestinian history, politics, culture, and geography, and is organized in the standard encyclopedic format. The 1990 edition is a series of specialized studies in these and other areas of interest to Palestinians by noted authors. It is supplemented by an index. The PLO financed the encyclopedia's compilation and leading figures in the Palestinian national movement sit on its editorial board.

⁶¹ For example, Faris al-Shidyaq (1804-1887). See, e.g., Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 97. See also Khadduri, p. 101.

⁶² Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 100. See also Sonn, p. 85.

Chief among these ideas was the concept of national unity, or ". . . the willingness of all who share the same country to cooperate on a level of equality."⁶³ One had to recognize that there exists a universal human nature and that all, at bottom, worship the same God. For the sake of the Arab world's general advancement, a sense of patriotism, or love of country (hubb al-watan), was desirable and the participation of all segments of society in its betterment was to be encouraged.⁶⁴

Despite his commitment to the revival of Arabic language and culture, however, Bustani never indicated a desire to break away from the Ottoman empire. Instead, he sought to improve conditions in the region comprising Lebanon and Syria, which was considered an autonomous Ottoman subdivision. Like Tahtawi and Khair al-Din, Bustani accepted the empire's legitimacy and sought to effect peaceful change, primarily through education and administrative reforms. The subsequent ideological generation, however, expanded the scope of its methods to include anti-government activism and even violence.

B. The Militant Reformers: Afghani and 'Abduh

The first member of this generation to advocate reform through violent and extra-legal means was a Muslim cleric named Jamal al-Din al-Asadabadi (1838-1897), better known as Jamal al-

⁶³ Hourani, Arab Thought, pp. 100-101.

⁶⁴ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 101. See also Sonn, p. 85.

Din al-Afghani.⁶⁵ Throughout his career as an activist, Afghani took Ottoman rulers to task for their inability to stem European military and cultural incursions into the region and, at times, advocated their violent overthrow. During his residence in Egypt, from 1871 through 1879, he acquired a government pension through the influence of a minister friend of his. During this time, he led a secret revolutionary organization, known as al-Hizb al-Watani, or the National Party, composed of Egyptian activists dissatisfied with the incompetence of Egypt's ruler, Khedive Isma'il, and what they regarded as undue European influence over the country. Afghani urged Egyptians to take direct action and overthrow the system, suggesting to his pupil and ideological heir, Muhammad 'Abduh (see below), that the Khedive be assassinated.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Born in what was then Persia and educated in the Shi'ite tradition of Islam, Jamal al-Din changed his surname to Afghani - with the intention of obscuring his Shi'ite origins - in order to allow him to operate in countries whose residents were primarily Sunnis. Afghanistan is in the same geographical area as Persia and its habitants were known to be Sunni Muslims. See S. Haim, ed., Arab Nationalism: An Anthology (London: University of California Press, 1976) (hereinafter "Haim"), pp. 6-7.

⁶⁶ W.S. Blunt, Secret History of the British Occupation of Egypt (New edition, 1924), p. 489, quoted in Haim, p. 8. See also Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 116-117. Afghani's violent sentiments remained with him throughout his life. In 1896, while living in Istanbul, he encouraged the murder of Nasir al-Din Shah, of Persia, and was quoted as saying, "There is no deliverance except in killing, there is no safety except in killing." See M.L. Khan (translated into Arabic by S. Nash'at and 'A. Hasanain), Jamal al-Din al-Asadabadi al-Ma'ruf bi al-Afghani [Jamal al-Din al-Asadabadi, Known as al-Afghani] (Cairo: 1957), quoted in Haim, p. 8.

Holding informal classes in his home, Afghani imparted his views to his disciples on ". . . theology, jurisprudence, mysticism, and philosophy . . . ," but also discussed " . . . the danger of European intervention, . . ." the means by which one might resist it, and the need for internal reforms (such as a constitution to limit the Khedive's power). While Isma'il tolerated Afghani's activity, his son Tawfiq did not and in 1879, had Afghani deported to India.⁶⁷

Because of his involvement in the underground opposition leadership in Egypt, the British authorities in India restricted Afghani's movements following the occupation of Egypt by British forces in 1882. By 1884, Afghani had made his way to Paris, where, together with Muhammad 'Abduh, he formed a clandestine organization composed of Muslims dedicated to working toward Islamic unity and reform. The group published eighteen issues of an Arabic-language periodical known as al-'Urwah al-Wuthqa [The Indissoluble Bond]. Discussion in al-'Urwah revolved around three principal issues: the policies of the European powers in Muslim regions, the exposure of what they regarded as Islam's inner weaknesses, and the admonition of fellow Muslims to take steps to rectify them.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 109.

⁶⁸ Hourani writes of Al-'Urwah that ". . . more than one thinker of a later generation has borne witness to the profound effect on him of a copy of it found and read by chance years afterwards." See Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 109-110. It is perhaps not entirely coincidental that future PFLP Secretary General George Habash was drawn to an organization of the same

(continued...)

Afghani believed that Islamic civilization had declined to a pitiable state and that Muslims were vulnerable to European encroachment because the rulers charged with protecting them and perpetuating their way of life were weak and incompetent. In order to correct this, ". . . the Muslims had to take matters into their own hands; they had to force, even terrorize, their rulers into governing efficiently, and they had to band together in order to present a powerful and united front to the encroaching European." European ambitions, according to Afghani, could be withstood only through the Ottoman empire's transformation into a strong and stable union of Islamic states and it was toward this goal that Afghani attempted to spur his fellow Muslims.⁶⁹

Afghani's concept of Islam differed from the traditional view, however, which held that living one's life according to Islamic law and tradition was an end in itself. It was not, as Afghani held, a ". . . powerful political force which enables men to band together in a strong state and successfully withstand their enemies."⁷⁰

⁶⁸ (...continued)

name during his student days at the American University of Beirut in the late 1940's. See Matar, p. 23. See also 'A. Muhafidh, "Al-Fikr al-Siyasi al-Filastini qabla 'Am 1948 [Palestinian Political Doctrine Before 1948]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 3 (Beirut: al-Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1990) (hereinafter "Muhafidh"), p. 530.

⁶⁹ Haim, p. 9.

⁷⁰ Haim, pp. 9-10.

For Afghani, religious solidarity was the means by which the Muslim world would maintain its political and cultural integrity against European attempts to undermine it.⁷¹ Whether or not this solidarity was sincere was immaterial so long as the objective was served.⁷² A common language and culture were more likely to unite the region than merely a common religion;⁷³ and while Afghani believed that true Islamic solidarity would theoretically prove far more effective in stemming what he regarded as European cultural and military assaults on the region⁷⁴ than national cohesion, the linguistic and cultural diversity of Islam's community of believers rendered religion less effective, in practice, for this purpose.⁷⁵

Like Tahtawi, Khair al-Din, and Bustani, Afghani recognized ". . . that the successes of Europe were due to knowledge and its proper application, and the weaknesses of the Muslim States to ignorance, and he knew that the orient must learn the useful arts of Europe. . . ." ⁷⁶ and like them, he knew that the region's ability to stand up to the West depended largely on the degree to

⁷¹ Haim, p. 14.

⁷² Haim, pp. 10-12.

⁷³ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 118.

⁷⁴ The perception of a physical European threat was sharpened among reformers in the region after France occupied Tunis in 1881 and Britain occupied Egypt in 1882. See Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 103.

⁷⁵ Haim, pp. 13-14. See also Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 118-119; Sonn, p. 93.

⁷⁶ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 114.

which it succeeded in learning them.⁷⁷ However, unlike his ideological predecessors, who believed that the Ottoman authorities were capable of adopting the necessary reforms to strengthen their hand against Europe, Afghani doubted their ability to do so and advocated their overthrow.

Like Bustani and other Christian Arab reformers, Afghani viewed Islam more as a civilization than merely as a religion, but unlike them, he was able to combine it with the European idea of national cohesion in order to make it palatable to his fellow Muslims, who had hitherto tended to resist all foreign concepts. By depicting such temporal notions as cultural and linguistic solidarity in Islamic terms, Afghani enabled them to become involved - alongside their Christian counterparts - in the infant Arab nationalist movement.

Afghani's most devoted disciple was an Egyptian seminary student named Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905), who, unlike his peripatetic mentor, was firmly rooted in his own homeland and its affairs. Born in Tantah to a family with a tradition of religious study, 'Abduh was sent, at the age of thirteen, to study at the village's Ahmadi mosque, which, at the time, was Egypt's greatest Islamic learning center beside Cairo's al-Azhar. The Ahmadi mosque's rote method of teaching thoroughly bored him and after awhile, he ran away. Persuaded to return by his uncle,

⁷⁷ Khadduri, p. 58.

'Abduh finished his studies in Tantah and then went on to study at al-Azhar, where he remained from 1869 to 1877.⁷⁸

While at al-Azhar, 'Abduh met Afghani for the first time as he passed through Cairo briefly. When Afghani returned to Cairo in 1871, 'Abduh attended the informal classes which his mentor held at his house and later helped to disseminate his ideas. Following his graduation from al-Azhar in 1877, 'Abduh taught there for a time, but held informal classes at his home, as well. Shortly thereafter, he began to lecture at Dar al-'Ulum, a college established not long before to teach modern subjects to al-Azhar students who later wished to become judges or instructors in government schools.⁷⁹

The 1870's were a period during which Egyptian national awareness was well-defined and clearly expressed. The government of the Ottoman sultan's representative, the Khedive Isma'il, had become deeply indebted to western banks, and the European powers - in order to secure their interests - assumed control over the Egyptian government's financial affairs. In 1878, as the Khedive's prime minister Nubar Pasha took office, European ministers assumed posts in his cabinet. When the Khedive dismissed them, and appeared to be on the verge of breaking away from European control, the Ottoman sultan in Istanbul - after succumbing to pressure from the European powers - deposed him in turn. The heavy taxes which he and his successor Tawfiq imposed

⁷⁸ Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 130-131.

⁷⁹ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 132. See also Haim, p. 17.

on the population in order to repay the government's foreign debt, however, made them enormously unpopular and galvanized an active and violent opposition movement.⁸⁰

Three principal factions comprised the opposition to Tawfiq's policies: those motivated by religious or nationalist sentiment, who were alarmed by the Khedive's apparent subservience to European influence and believed that this would endanger Egypt's independence; those who wanted to see the Khedive's absolute rule replaced by a constitutional government; and native-born Egyptian military officers who sought to wrest control of the army from the 'Turco-Circassian' officers.⁸¹

British and French support for Tawfiq against the opposition groups prompted them to combine into a single movement, whose leader was an Egyptian military officer named 'Urabi Pasha. At the beginning of 1882, 'Urabi Pasha became the Minister of War and, in effect headed the government. The British and French considered his government a threat to their interests and the period of tension which followed ended with the British bombing of Alexandria and occupation of Egypt in September of that year.⁸²

During this time, 'Abduh played an active part in the opposition movement. Although he disapproved of the methods of

⁸⁰ Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 132-133.

⁸¹ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 133.

⁸² Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 133. See also Mortimer, p. 75.

the military faction's leaders, he offered what aid he could to them in organizing a national resistance to the British occupation. Following the resistance movement's subsequent collapse in 1882, the British restored the khedival government to power. 'Abduh was subsequently arrested and sentenced to be exiled for three years.⁸³

'Abduh's travels in exile took him first to Beirut and then to Paris, where he collaborated with Afghani in establishing his underground organization and publishing al-'Urwah. When al-'Urwah ceased publication, he moved on. 'Abduh eventually returned to Beirut, where, for three years, he lectured on theology at a school established by a Muslim charitable organization. As in Cairo, his Beirut home was the site of informal lectures on Islam and the Arabic language, which drew Muslim, as well as Christian and Druze, intellectuals.⁸⁴

In 1888, the Khedive allowed 'Abduh to return to Egypt. Although 'Abduh hoped to resume his teaching career, the Khedive feared that allowing him to do so would unfavorably influence his students. Instead, 'Abduh was made a judge in the system of tribunals established in 1883 to decide cases involving the secular legal codes promulgated that year.

While he continued to work in this capacity until his death in 1905, he served in other capacities as well. The most

⁸³ See Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 133-134. See also Haim, p. 17; Khadduri, p. 60.

⁸⁴ See Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 134. See also Haim, p. 17; Khadduri, p. 60.

important of these was as Mufti of Egypt, a post to which he was appointed in 1899. This granted him ultimate authority over the entire Egyptian system of religious law. During his tenure, 'Abduh issued edicts on public issues which reinterpreted them in light of modern circumstances. Not long thereafter, he was appointed to be a member of the Legislative Council, a governmental advisory body.⁸⁵

Throughout his public service career, 'Abduh involved himself in educational reform and the establishment of new schools in Egypt. In this capacity, he participated in the creation and administration of the Muslim Benefit Society, whose purpose was to establish private schools. 'Abduh also prevailed upon the Khedive in 1895 to authorize an administrative council for al-Azhar. He served on the council for ten years and during this time, succeeded in reforming the university's teaching methods and curriculum to meet the needs of modern life.⁸⁶

When 'Abduh came of age in the 1870's, Egypt was experiencing the second stage of the modernization process begun in the early nineteenth century - under Muhammad 'Ali - with the dispatch of study missions to Europe and the establishment of individual local science and foreign language teaching institutions. The Khedive Isma'il further advanced the modernization process by enacting legal codes based on human

⁸⁵ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 134. See also Khadduri, pp. 60 and 62.

⁸⁶ See Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 135.

reason, rather than on divine law, and establishing a school system modeled after those in Europe.

'Abduh accepted many of the changes as inevitable and even necessary. However, they produced a division of the Egyptian population between its religious element, governed by Islamic principles, and its secular element, which embraced the imported European innovations unconditionally. The measures were, in effect, an attempt to secularize a society which would always have a strong Islamic component and could, therefore, never be completely secularized. 'Abduh's fear was that unless the means were found to bridge the gap between the perspectives of these two opposing spheres, Egypt's societal fabric would deteriorate irreparably.⁸⁷

The schism was most apparent in what 'Abduh considered society's essential elements: its legal and educational systems. 'Abduh believed that a society derived its laws from a unique history and set of circumstances. Society could not adopt laws which went beyond these parameters - as he believed the European-style legal codes did - since the inhabitants, unable to relate them to their own experiences, would find them meaningless.⁸⁸

'Abduh was similarly concerned over the competition between the traditional religious schools, on the one hand, and the modern European-style schools, on the other. He found them both

⁸⁷ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 136. See also Khadduri, pp. 60-61.

⁸⁸ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 137.

unsatisfactory because neither prepared Egyptian students to compete in the modern world while maintaining their Islamic identity. The traditional religious schools taught Islam without integrating its instruction with courses in the modern sciences. The mission schools, while they taught modern science - as well as European languages and ideas - were administered by foreigners. Whether intentionally or not, a mission school education drew the students away from their native religion and culture and closer to that of their teachers - so much so that there were instances of Muslim children being converted to Christianity.⁸⁹ At best, Egyptian students at these schools, whose curriculum was taught in a foreign language, would become dependent on the language and culture imparted there for intellectual advancement. The Ottoman government schools were similar in every way to the mission schools, except that they did not teach Christianity. However, the manner in which they taught Islam was stilted and descriptive, and did not include instruction in social and political morality.⁹⁰

The result, 'Abduh feared, would be Egyptian society's polarization into two segments; on the one hand, a completely secularized element, estranged from its religious and cultural roots and on the other, an element steeped in Islamic tradition,

⁸⁹ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 137.

⁹⁰ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 138.

but, lacking training in modern science and ideas, unable to apply it to the modern world.⁹¹

'Abduh, therefore, took it upon himself to find common ground for these two elements. The question for him was not, as it had been for Khair al-Din, whether modern concepts and institutions could be made acceptable to Muslims, but rather, whether a person living in modern society could be an observant Muslim, as well. In other words, could Islamic precepts - or indeed those of any other revealed religion - still serve as a moral guide?⁹²

'Abduh set out to prove that they could. The modern concepts imported from Europe opened a wide range of behavioral and policy choices for Egyptians and Islam, he claimed, was the means by which they would make the correct ones. One must first restate Islam's true nature and then consider its implications for modern society.⁹³ The ideal society was one which applied Islamic law in the public interest. This described Islam's true nature and reflected its original interpretation.⁹⁴

Observant Muslims, 'Abduh believed, were unable to distinguish between the essential and the superficial and tended to attach the same importance to detailed social regulations

⁹¹ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 138. See also Haim, pp. 17-18.

⁹² Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 139. See also Haim, p. 17.

⁹³ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 140. See also Khadduri, p. 63.

⁹⁴ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 149.

formulated during Islam's early centuries as they did to its fundamental and eternal principles upon which these regulations were based. This made it difficult for them to change and accept the modern concepts which he considered essential to enabling Egypt to compete with the rest of the world. 'Abduh believed that Egypt's Turkish rulers had encouraged this blind application of archaic laws in order to instill apathy among their subjects. They feared, in his view, that the acquisition of knowledge would awaken the citizenry to its backward state and prompt its members to demand changes in the manner in which they were governed.⁹⁵

'Abduh sought to make Islam fully rational and compatible with modern science and philosophy. Although he is not considered a nationalist, his ideas are relevant to the study of Arab nationalism's development in that they fostered the belief that human initiative - based on reason - could change society for the better. In so doing, ". . . he exemplified and made popular a hopeful attitude toward politics . . . " in Egypt.⁹⁶

C. The Authentic Arab Nationalists: Rida, Zuraiq, and Husri

Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865-1935), 'Abduh's ideological successor, may be regarded as the first true Arab nationalist. While 'Abduh had no great love for the Turks, he counted them, along with all other Muslims, as potential beneficiaries of his ideas; and while Rida shared 'Abduh's discontent with Islam's

⁹⁵ Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 150-151. See also Haim, p. 17; Khadduri, pp. 62-64.

⁹⁶ Haim, p. 18.

current state and desire to restore to it its previous glory, it was the Arabs, to the exclusion of all others, who were the focus of his thoughts and whom, as opposed to the Turks,⁹⁷ he considered the 'true ummah'.⁹⁸

Rida was born near Tripoli, Lebanon and came to Egypt in 1897, where he lived for the remainder of his life editing the periodical Al-Manar [The Lighthouse]. Through Al-Manar, Rida spread the notion that only by studying the history of the Arabs and working to revive their past glories could Islamic unity be achieved. This unity only existed

. . . in past centuries thanks to the Arabs, and will not return in this century except through them, united and in agreement with all races. The basis of this union is Islam itself, and Islam is none other than the book of God Almighty, and the Sunna of his prophet - prayer and peace be upon Him. Both are in Arabic. No one can understand them properly unless he understands their noble language.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Rida believed that the contribution of the Arabs to the Islam's advancement far outweighed that of the Turks. "Most of the lands which the Turks conquered," he maintained, "were a burden on Islam and the Muslims, and are still a warning of clear catastrophe . . . " while it was "in the countries which were conquered by the Arabs that Islam spread, became firmly established and prospered." See "Al-Turk wa al-'Arab [The Turks and the Arabs]," Al-Manar, III (Cairo, 1900), p. 172, quoted in Haim, pp. 22-23.

⁹⁸ Haim, pp. 20-22.

⁹⁹ Al-Manar, III (Cairo, 1900), pp. 290-291, quoted in Haim, p. 23. See also Khadduri, p. 181. Through Al-Manar, as well, Rida warned against the dangers which he and his contemporaries believed the Zionist movement posed for the Arab nationalist movement in Palestine; an alarm which his ideological heirs continued to sound in their writings. See 'A. Rafiq, "Filastin fi 'Ahd al-'Uthmaniyyin (2): Min Matla' al-Qarn al-Thalith 'Ashir al-Hijri/al-Tasi' 'Ahir al-Miladi li al-'Am 1336 H./1918 M. [Palestine During the Ottoman Period (2): From the Beginning of (continued...)

The notion of Islam as an expression of Arab nationalism, and vice versa, had gained widespread popularity, through Rida, among Arab intellectuals and enabled both Muslim and Christian Arabs to share a common glorious history and common future goals. The next generation of Arab nationalist thinkers, consequently, did not feel compelled to justify the adoption of modern technology and political ideas in Islamic terms. That the two were compatible had already been well-established.

Two of these philosophers are particularly relevant to this study's main topic for the lasting impression they made on George Habash and his associates during their student days at the American University in Beirut and eventually formed the basis for the PFLP's ideology.¹⁰⁰ They are Qustantin Zuraïq¹⁰¹ and Sati' al-Husri.

Qustantin Zuraïq, a Greek Orthodox Christian from Damascus,

⁹⁹ (...continued)
the Thirteenth Century A.H./Nineteenth Century A.D. to 1336 A.H./1918 A.D.], " Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 2 (Beirut: al-Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1990) (hereinafter "Rafiq"), p. 873; M. al-Fara, "Madhkhal ila Dirasah al-Qadhiyyah al-Filastiniyyah [Introduction to the Study of the Palestinian Issue]", " Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, Vol. 5 (Beirut: al-Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1990) (hereinafter "al-Fara"), pp. 8-9; K. Qasimiyyah, "al-Harakah al-Wataniyyah al-Filastiniyyah fi Thulthi al-Qarn al-Hali (1900-1964) [The Palestinian National Movement During the First Two Thirds of this Century (1900-1964)]", " Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, Vol 5 (Beirut: al-Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1990) (hereinafter "Qasimiyyah"), pp. 44, 48, 50, and 53.

¹⁰⁰ Matar, pp. 31-32.

¹⁰¹ Hourani described Zuraïq as the "... consulting don to a whole generation of nationalists." Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 309.

was a professor and medieval historian at the American University of Beirut whose 1939 book of essays, al-Wa'i al-Qawmi [National Consciousness], provided the doctrinal foundation for secular Arab nationalists during the second half of the twentieth century. The Arabs' basic problem, he wrote, was that collectively, they had no convictions and were, therefore, incapable of surrendering their individual concerns to those of an organization acting for the common good. Nationalism, or ". . . a sense of collective responsibility, the will to create and maintain a community," would supply those convictions.¹⁰²

This community would draw inspiration from a religion, since religions contain the moral principles ". . . necessary to build a stable and prosperous society." While all religions professed the same essential principles, Islam was the only one whose history and culture suited the nationalist movement because it was so uniquely Arab. Although a Christian, he regarded the prophet Muhammad as an Arab national hero who united a collection of scattered tribes, imparted to them a feeling of solidarity, and transformed them into an empire. Islam and the prophet Muhammad, Zuraiq believed, were an inseparable part of the Arab consciousness and all Arabs, regardless of their religion, should draw guidance and inspiration from them.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 309.

¹⁰³ Zuraiq's appreciation of Islam was historical and cultural and he never suggested that Arabs should adhere to Islamic law or attempt to restore the Caliphate. See Al-Wa'i al-Qawmi (Beirut, 1949), pp. 109-118, translated and reprinted in (continued...)

Zuraiq was an early activist in the Palestinian cause. The Arab Nationalist Bloc, formed in Palestine in 1929, established ties with Zuraiq's Arab Nationalist Society in Lebanon and merged with it in 1937.¹⁰⁴ Following Israel's defeat of the combined Arab forces sent to destroy it in 1948, Zuraiq characterized the Palestinian cause as having ". . . exceptional historical value and consequently, should not be solely an Arab battle, but an international humane one as well. Secondly, he emphasized that ideologically and historically, challenges had always stimulated civilizational development and that it should be assumed that the defeat would play this role for us." As PFLP doctrine would later uphold, the conditions for Palestine's liberation were, according to Zuraiq, ". . . the strengthening of the sense of the Zionist danger in every Arab country, international contacts, involvement of the popular forces in the battle, and dissatisfaction with the role of the [Arab] regimes' forces." A longterm solution to the conflict would require ". . . a fundamental revolution in Arab society, based on the premise that the Jewish victory was not due to the superiority of one nation over another, but of one regime over another."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ (...continued)

Haim, pp. 167-171. See also Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 309-310; Khadduri, p. 184; Sonn, p. 139.

¹⁰⁴ Muhafidh, p. 552.

¹⁰⁵ I. Sahab, "Al-Fikr al-Siyasi al-Filastini ba'da 'Am 1948: al-Kitabat al-Siyasiyyah al-Filastiniyyah hawla al-Qadhiyyah al-Filastiniyyah [Palestinian Political Ideology after 1948: Palestinian Political Writings on the Palestinian Cause]," Al-
(continued...)

George Habash was among those who attended Zuraiq's lectures at AUB on ". . . Arab nationalism and the Zionist danger . . ." in the late 1940's and early 1950's.¹⁰⁶ Among the principles imparted to Habash by Zuraiq, which later appeared in PFLP doctrine, was the importance of following a set of principles under strict organizational control, as well as that of subordinating one's individual concerns to those of the nation.¹⁰⁷ Zuraiq, however, was opposed to the use of violent and conspiratorial methods advocated by Habash and his fellow students and called upon them to ". . . calm down."¹⁰⁸

Habash was also greatly influenced by Sati' al-Husri,¹⁰⁹ an Arab Muslim intellectual who, like Rida, gave priority to Arab unity over Islamic unity. Unlike Zuraiq, who expressed appreciation for Islam's historical and cultural aspects, Husri drew a sharp distinction between nationalism and religion. While he believed, as did Afghani, that religion could serve as an important social force in motivating people to achieve nationalist goals, it could never replace, or complement,

¹⁰⁵ (...continued)

Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 3 (Beirut: al-Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1990) (hereinafter "Sahab"), p. 615.

¹⁰⁶ See Matar, p. 18. See also Qasimiyyah, p. 120.

¹⁰⁷ PFLP, Al-Istratijiyyah al-Siyasiyyah wa al-Tandhimiyyah [The Political and Organizational Strategy] (No place of publication: Central Information Committee, 1983) (hereinafter "Strategy 1983"), pp. 43-46.

¹⁰⁸ Matar, p. 24.

¹⁰⁹ Matar, pp. 31-32.

nationalism. Judaism, for example, was a national religion, and, as such, could become a basic nationalist element.¹¹⁰ Universal religions, such as Islam and Christianity, did not recognize national differences and could therefore weaken national solidarity.¹¹¹

People, according to Husri, formed nations based on two principal factors: a common language and a common history. Language provided the medium through which a nation's inhabitants communicated ideas to one another and by which its collective memory and self-consciousness were preserved. A nation's history was that very collective memory. A nation could lose its self-awareness by forgetting its history and regain it through a renewed interest.¹¹²

In addition to national cohesiveness, Husri outlined two additional requirements for a stable political community: territorial patriotism and loyalty to the state. A nation being a group of people sharing a common language and history, these people must inhabit a single territory, belonging to them and to no one else, and owe loyalty to a single government which represents their collective will. When this takes place, Husri explains,

¹¹⁰ A notion with which Habash would undoubtedly feel uncomfortable, since it unwittingly conferred legitimacy upon the State of Israel.

¹¹¹ Khadduri, pp. 202-203.

¹¹² Sahab, p. 655. See also Khadduri, pp. 203-204.

. . . society is politically stable, and so are political thoughts and feelings. There is no dispute or ambiguity, no self-questioning, no division of loyalties. When it does not exist, then political ideas are complicated and ambiguous, and there is a division of political beliefs which may be dangerous.¹¹³

The emergence of Arab nationalism - and its subsequent application to the Palestinian context - was the result of a long historical process of growth, decline, reevaluation, and readjustment. The rise and expansion of Islam spread Arab language and culture throughout Arabia, the Levant, North Africa, and parts of Europe and, for a time, united its peoples under a single religious polity. The empire was militarily and politically strong and ruled its subjects through a stable legal system under which commerce and scientific research flourished. This stability weakened, in the Arab nationalist view, with the coming to power of the Ottoman Turks. The Turks, although Muslims, interpreted Islamic law in a manner intended to preserve their ruling status, rather than benefit society as a whole. This approach weakened the Islamic polity to such an extent that its European rivals, whose legal systems and moral attitudes were

¹¹³ Hourani, Arabic Thought, p. 313. The PFLP emphasizes the importance of presenting a unified political position as well and discourages open dissent within its ranks. See, e.g. G. Habash, [interviewed by T. Ahmad], "Fi Hadith Shamil hawlah A'mal al-Mu'tamar al-Watani al-Khamis li al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir Filastin: D. Jurj Habash: Al-Jabhah Wadhihah wa Mutamasikah wa Muwahhadah, wa lan nakhdha'u li Ibtizaz wa Irhab Ahad [In a Comprehensive Discussion on the Activities of the Fifth National Congress of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Dr. George Habash: The Front is Clear, Solid, and United, and Will Never Yield to Anyone's Robbery or Terror]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1145, May 2, 1993, pp. 11-24.

aimed improving their inhabitants' welfare, were able to penetrate and take over the Arab world economically and, as a result exert undue military and political influence over the region.

Arab nationalists, and those who preceded them, sought to explain this decline (mindful that the Arabs had not always been weak) and search for ways to correct the Arab world's weaknesses. Finally, they sought ways to take appropriate measures to restore the Arabs to their previous position of strength, whereby they could stand on their own with little fear of infringement upon their independence and freedom of action by foreigners. The first step in this process involved the study of Arab history and language, in the hope of using these to demonstrate the Arabs' common past and destiny. The next step was for the Arabs to acquire the knowledge and ideas which had made their European rivals strong enough to threaten their independence. This involved the study of modern science and political concepts and applying them to Arab society in a way which would not radically alter its character. The final step was to use this knowledge to eliminate all hostile foreign elements in the area and prevent their return. This involved the training of scientists and technicians in European methods and the modernization of the region's military forces.

Arab nationalists viewed the modern Zionist movement's emergence towards the end of the nineteenth century as the latest - and most blatant- European attack on the region, because it

sought to establish a westernized Jewish state on a portion of what they regarded as Arab territory. The cause of the Palestinian Arabs against the Zionist movement, then, was an opportunity to put into practice the nationalist concepts which had hitherto been only theoretical. The following chapter will survey the history of the Palestinian national movement and its trends in terms of these concepts.

Chapter 4: A History of Palestinian Nationalism

When the Palestinian national movement first emerged in the late nineteenth century, Arab nationalism was beginning to move from the theoretical to the activist stage and the Palestinian cause was widely regarded by Arab nationalists as an opportunity to apply the principles that had evolved over the past few decades. All of the elements in their theory were present as far as they were concerned: 1) An indigenous Arab population in the process of redefining itself as a nation; 2) A 'settler colonial' element, supported by the European powers, attempting to deny them that identity; and 3) the emergence of a national resistance movement to combat the 'foreign invaders'.

Prior to 1918, the year in which British military forces occupied Palestine, the two factors which gave impetus to Palestinian Arab communal activity were: 1) fear of Jewish immigration to Palestine and its expected detrimental effect on the country's Arab population; and 2) the desire to be independent of foreign rule, although as part of a larger Arab national entity. There was, as yet, no distinct Palestinian national consciousness and no organized Arab body capable of either articulating these issues effectively to the governing authority or resolving them favorably through armed force. Rather, the local Arabs (who would later be identified as Palestinians) considered themselves Ottoman citizens. With the enactment of the empire's constitution in 1876, they began

sending representatives to the Ottoman Parliament in Constantinople.

In the wake of Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid's overthrow in 1908, and the political reforms which followed, the empire's Arab subjects expressed their fears of assimilation by the Turks, as well as the loss of their cultural identity, more openly. They demanded a decentralized regime which would grant the Arab areas semi-autonomy.¹¹⁴ Ironically, the Arabs' political revival coincided with the beginning of modern Zionism's organized endeavor to re-establish a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine.

As the modern Zionist movement began a concerted effort to resettle what was then Ottoman Palestine in the late 1870's, the Ottoman authorities' response wavered between measures which both encouraged and discouraged Jewish immigration and land purchases. The local Arab population expressed opposition through its religious leadership, its intellectuals, its parliamentary representatives, the press, and intermittent public demonstrations. In 1897, a Muslim commission, headed by the Mufti of Jerusalem, Muhammad Tahir al-Husseini, investigated the Zionist movement's land-acquisition methods.¹¹⁵ In 1898, the Cairo journal Al-Manar warned that the Zionist movement aimed "to take over Palestine"¹¹⁶ and expressed similar fears in 1902.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Khadduri, pp. 16-18.

¹¹⁵ W. Khalidi, Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians 1876-1948 (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1984) (hereinafter, "W. Khalidi"), p. 37.

¹¹⁶ Id.

A. Initial Stirrings

By 1908, Palestinian newspapers began to actively oppose the Zionist settlement effort. That year, Al-Karmil was founded in Haifa ". . . with the purpose of opposing Zionist colonization . . ." and in 1911, Filastin began publication, referring to its readers, for the first time, as 'Palestinians.'¹¹⁸ In 1913, Filastin warned that ". . . the Zionists will gain mastery over our country village by village, town by town."¹¹⁹ These proto-nationalist stirrings reflected the local Arabs' uncertainty over the most effective means by which to confront Jewish immigration. Palestinians did not, however, perceive the threat as sufficiently acute to galvanize them into a high degree of activism and national consciousness. It was the diplomacy which took place during World War I, from 1914 to 1918, which both raised their hopes for independence and justified their fears that the Zionist enterprise might succeed - and thus impelled them to organize themselves politically.

In July 1915, the second year of the war, a correspondence began between Sharif Hussein of Mecca and Sir Henry McMahon, the British High Commissioner in Cairo. Following its conclusion in January 1916, Arab leaders interpreted the contents of the

¹¹⁷ (...continued)

¹¹⁷ W. Khalidi, p. 38.

¹¹⁸ Id. See also "Al-Karmil," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [Palestinian Encyclopedia, Vol. 3 (Damascus: al-Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), p. 642; "Filastin," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [Palestinian Encyclopedia, Vol. 3 (Damascus: al-Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), pp. 466-467.

¹¹⁹ W. Khalidi, p. 39.

exchange as British assurances of postwar independence for all areas over which they claimed sovereignty, including Palestine. In 1917, the British government seemed to contradict these assurances with a message from Foreign Secretary Sir Arthur James Balfour to Baron Lionel Walter de Rothschild, which pledged British support for the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine.

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.¹²⁰

These contradictory promises placed the British in a quandary, following their occupation of Palestine in 1918, over how to reconcile the two positions.

B. Formal Institutional Development: 1918-1947

From 1918 until 1947, the Palestinian movement first acquired organized nationalist attributes in the form of Palestinian national congresses. Held between 1919 and 1928, these congresses authorized Palestinian Arab delegations to present the community's fears and demands to the British mandatory authorities in Palestine, the British government in London, and international bodies elsewhere. Through the

¹²⁰ Quoted in A. Frangi, The PLO and Palestine (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1983) (hereinafter "Frangi"), p. 42. This is a general history of the Palestinian national movement by the PLO's representative in Germany.

Executive Committee, they also authorized economic boycotts, general strikes, and political demonstrations.¹²¹

The First Palestinian Congress met in Jerusalem, between January 27 and February 10, 1919. It sent two memoranda to the Paris Peace Conference demanding independence and rejecting the Balfour Declaration. The violence which broke out in the country prompted the British to prevent the second congress from convening in May of that year, but subsequent congresses engaged in similar activities.

The Third Palestinian Congress, held in Haifa in December, elected an Executive Committee, which controlled the Palestinian political infrastructure until 1935.¹²²

In the 1930's, Palestinian Arabs began to form political parties, beginning with the pan-Arabist Istiqlal Party (1932),¹²³ and followed by the National Defense Party,¹²⁴ the

¹²¹ Muhafidh, pp. 532-535.

¹²² W. Khalidi, p. 89.

¹²³ Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, A Survey of Palestine: Prepared in December 1945 and January 1946 for the Information of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry (Jerusalem?: Government Printer, 1946-1947) (hereinafter, "Survey of Palestine"), p. 30. This three volume study, which was prepared in December 1945 and January 1946, describes all aspects of life in the mandated territory from the British authorities' viewpoint. Its first volume contains a chronology of events - from the capture of Be'er Sheva' by British forces in 1917, until 1945, the year in which the report was prepared. The chronology is useful as a supplement to the antagonists' often conflicting accounts. See also "Al-Istiqlal (Hizb) [The Istiqlal (Party), Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [Palestinian Encyclopedia, Vol. 1 (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), pp. 209-210; Muhafidh, p. 535.

Palestine Arab Party,¹²⁵ the Arab Reform Party¹²⁶ in 1934, and the National Bloc Party in 1935.¹²⁷ In 1936, Palestinian political activity spread to the grass-roots level with the establishment of 'National Committees,' subsidiaries of the Nablus-based Arab National Committee, in the country's Arab towns and large villages.¹²⁸ The dominant parties, the National Defense Party and the Palestinian Arab Party, were led by the rival Nashashibi and Husseini families, respectively. They had ". . . no internal elections or western-style institutions, and no dues, and were based on family and local affiliations and loyalties. Families, clans and villages rather than individuals were party members, with semi-feudal links of dependence and loyalty determining attachment." The two camps vied with each

¹²⁴ (...continued)

¹²⁴ "Al-Difa' al-Watani (Hizb) [National Defense (Party)]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 2 (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), pp. 410-412. See also Muhafidh, p. 535.

¹²⁵ "Al-Hizb al-'Arabi al-Filastini [Palestinian Arab Party]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 2 (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), pp. 227-233. See also Muhafidh, p. 535.

¹²⁶ "Al-Islah (Hizb) [Reform (Party)]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 1 (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), pp. 260-261. See also Muhafidh, p. 535.

¹²⁷ Survey of Palestine, p. 32. See also "Al-Kutlah al-Wataniyyah (Hizb) [The National Bloc (Party)]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 3, (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), pp. 633-634. See also Muhafidh, p. 535.

¹²⁸ Survey of Palestine, p. 35. See also Muhafidh, p. 535.

other for power and influence, competing for followers among the country's elite families.¹²⁹

In the same year, the Palestinian political parties formed the Arab Higher Committee (AHC) to represent their common interests. The AHC, under Al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini's chairmanship, authorized general strikes and boycotts, dealt with the Arab countries' leaders, and represented the Palestinian Arab community to the British government and the international community.¹³⁰

1936 also marked the beginning of a three-year period of Palestinian violence, known among Palestinians as either "the Great Rebellion"¹³¹ or "Thawrah 1936-1939 (the 1936-1939 Revolution)."¹³² While there had been earlier

¹²⁹ B. Morris, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) (hereinafter "Morris"), p. 13. An unblinking examination by a politically moderate Israeli historian of the roles played by both the Israeli and invading Arab forces in the 1947-1949 flight of the Palestinian refugees. See also J. Peteet, Gender in Crisis: Women and the Palestinian Resistance Movement (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991) (hereinafter "Peteet"), pp. 54-56.

¹³⁰ Id. See also Survey of Palestine, p. 35; "Al-Lajnah al-'Arabiyyah al-'Ulya li Filastin [The Arab Higher Committee for Palestine]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyah, Vol. 4 (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), p. 27-30; Muhafidh, p. 535.

¹³¹ W. Khalidi, p. 189.

¹³² "Thawrah 1936-1939 [The 1936-1939 Revolution]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, Vol. I (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984) (hereinafter, "Thawrah 1936-1939"), p. 622.

'revolutions,'¹³³ they were generally localized violent disturbances, lasting only a few months at most, which stemmed from demonstrations that had developed into clashes with either Jews or British riot police. Poor coordination and haphazard leadership made them difficult to sustain and enabled the mandatory authorities to quickly suppress them. By April 1936, however, the National Committees had formed branches all over Palestine and by May, had combined to form the AHC, which was able to coordinate country-wide political activity.

The first stage of the violent three-year period lasted from April to December 1936. It began with a general strike in April, but this was soon followed by armed attacks and violence in May.¹³⁴ As the strike gave way to general violence, the traditional enmities between the Husseinis and Nashashibis - who

¹³³ 1920, 1929, and 1935.

¹³⁴ Survey of Palestine describes the escalation of violence in the following manner:

During May and June the strike was effectively imposed; Jaffa port was put out of action; there were intermittent local demonstrations and assaults on Jews; there was destruction of Jewish property and sniping at Jewish settlements; sporadic attacks were made on the railway lines, two trains were derailed, roads barricaded and telephone wires cut; and armed bands, swelled by volunteers from Syria and Iraq, made their appearance in the hills.

From 11th May onwards the military forces were reinforced from Egypt and Malta; until August, no attacks were made on the bands in the hills, the troops being used for the defense of key points and the patrolling of roads and highways. Arab agitators and some of the Arab leaders were interned.

Survey of Palestine, p. 36. See also Muhafidh, p. 535.

had joined forces at the beginning of the strike - re-emerged, with the Nashashibis representing those Palestinians who regarded the strike and rebellion as fruitless and the Husseinis representing those who wished to continue with it. Internecine violence ensued during which ". . . [a]ssassination and intimidation by the Husaynis decimated the Opposition ranks; terrorism, extortion, rapine and brigandage against villagers and town-dwellers by the armed bands and the inevitable search and destroy operations against the rebels by the British military alienated much of the population."¹³⁵

The official Palestinian version of the 1936 rebellion omits any mention of internecine killing. W. Khalidi maintains that all efforts at this time were directed toward enforcing the strike, which, according to the AHC, was aimed at compelling the British to halt all Jewish immigration.¹³⁶ When the British did not accede to this demand, the AHC officially announced the beginning of an 'armed rebellion' in May.

Following the AHC's announcement, armed units of Al-Jaish al-Jihad al-Muqaddas (Army of the Holy Jihad), under the command of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husseini, began to operate against British army and police units - as well as against Jewish settlements - in the Jerusalem area. At first, these operations were limited to the Jerusalem and Jaffa areas, but were later extended to the rest of the country. The Jihad al-Muqaddas units were supported

¹³⁵ Morris., pp. 13-14.

¹³⁶ Thawrah 1936-1939, pp. 626-627.

by volunteers from Transjordan and Syria under the command of Fawzi al-Qawuqji.¹³⁷

While sending in reinforcements in an attempt to quell the violence, the British simultaneously dispatched a commission of inquiry, led by Lord Peel, in order to ascertain its causes. The governments of the neighboring Arab countries appealed to AHC to halt the general strike and appear before the Peel Commission. The AHC finally agreed to do so on October 11 and there was a brief cease-fire while the commission toured the country.¹³⁸

On July 7, 1937, the Peel Commission issued its report. The report attributed the hostilities to the Palestinian Arabs' desire for independence and their fear of continued Jewish immigration. It recommended that Palestine be partitioned into a Jewish State, an Arab state (to be incorporated into Transjordan), and Mandatory enclaves. The AHC found these recommendations unacceptable because they entailed recognition of Jewish claims to the country. It also feared that Arab-owned

¹³⁷ Id., p. 627. See also Survey of Palestine, p. 37; "Fawzi al-Qawuqji (1890-1977)," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [Palestinian Encyclopedia] (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), pp. 480-484; Muhafidh, p. 540.

¹³⁸ Survey of Palestine, pp. 37-38. See also "Bil (Lajnah) [Peel (Commission)]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol 1 (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), pp. 492-494; 'A. Yasin, "Al-Sihafah al-Arabiyyah fi Filastin [The Arabic Press in Palestine]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, Vol. 4 (Beirut: al-Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1990) (hereinafter "Yasin"), p. 446.

land inside the Jewish areas would be confiscated and the Arab residents deported.¹³⁹

Arab violence escalated as a result and in September, Arabs assassinated a senior British administrator in Nazareth.¹⁴⁰ The British responded by outlawing the AHC, as well as all other Arab political organizations. They arrested tens of Palestinian leaders, exiling five of them, and placed thousands of Palestinians into detention camps. The penalty for arms possession was death and towns and villages participating in the hostilities were punished collectively.¹⁴¹

While maintaining its efforts to suppress the violence militarily, the British government sent another commission of inquiry in April 1938, headed by Sir John Woodhead, to study the practical aspects of implementing partition.¹⁴² The Woodhead Commission's report, published in November 1938, concluded that partition was not feasible.¹⁴³ At the same time, the British government invited Zionist and Palestinian leaders, as well as

¹³⁹ W. Khalidi, pp. 189-190. See also Survey of Palestine, pp. 40-41; Yasin, p. 446.

¹⁴⁰ W. Khalidi, p. 190.

¹⁴¹ W. Khalidi, 189-190. See also Survey of Palestine, pp. 42-43.

¹⁴² Id., p. 44.

¹⁴³ Survey of Palestine, pp. 46-48. See also "Wudhaid (Lajnah) [Woodhead (Commission)]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [Palestinian Encyclopedia] (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), pp. 599-600; A. Tarabain, "Filastin fi 'Ahd al-Intidab al-Baritani [Palestine During the British Mandate]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah (Beirut: al-Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1990) (hereinafter "Tarabain"), p. 1050.

representatives of the surrounding Arab countries, to a conference in London. The conference, which lasted from February 7 to March 27, 1939, failed to produce an agreement acceptable to all parties.¹⁴⁴

This failure to achieve an agreement prompted the British government to annunciate a new policy on Palestine, in May 1939, in the form of a White Paper. The policy stated that Britain had fulfilled its obligation to create a Jewish national home in Palestine. Over the next five years, 75,000 more Jews would be allowed into the country, after which further immigration would be subject to Arab acquiescence. Jewish land transfers would be permitted in certain areas and prohibited in others and after ten years, an independent unitary state would be established, conditional upon satisfactory Arab-Jewish relations.¹⁴⁵

While Arab leaders expressed some reservations about the new policy, which they did not believe went far enough, Jewish leaders accused the British government of reneging on its commitment to Jewish independence in an effort to appease the Arab side. A falling out between the Zionist movement and the mandatory authorities resulted.¹⁴⁶ The more extreme Jewish underground organizations - the Irgun Hatseva'i Hale'umi and later, the Stern Group - stepped up their attacks on British

¹⁴⁴ W. Khalidi, pp. 190-191. See Survey of Palestine, pp. 48-51.

¹⁴⁵ W. Khalidi, p. 191. See also Survey of Palestine, pp. 52-54. Document reprinted on pp. 90-99; Yasin, p. 447.

¹⁴⁶ Id., p. 54.

personnel.¹⁴⁷ These attacks escalated until 1947, when an exasperated British government turned to the United Nations to decide the fate of its Palestine mandate.

During the Second World War (1939-1945), the British mandatory authorities continued to consider the AHC an illegal organization. Its leader, Al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini, managed to flee the country in 1941 and spent the war years in the Axis countries. Efforts to disarm the Arab (as well as the Jewish) population continued and the British continued to detain Palestinians whom they suspected of subversion.¹⁴⁸

In October 1944, Egyptian, Iraqi, Lebanese, Saudi, Syrian, Transjordanian, Yemeni, and Palestinian representatives held a preparatory conference on Arab unity in Alexandria, Egypt and in March of the following year, founded the League of Arab States. The League pledged to maintain Palestine's 'Arab character' and over the next few years, represented the Palestinian Arabs in the international arena.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Although it has been generally established that the Irgun and Stern group were primarily responsible for attacks on British personnel and facilities, A Survey of Palestine does not name them specifically as the perpetrators.

¹⁴⁸ See generally Survey of Palestine, pp. 56-70. See also Frangi, p. 76.

¹⁴⁹ W. Khalidi, pp. 242-243. The Arab League's Covenant noted that Palestine was the only territory in the Arab World whose right to independence had been called into question and pledged that "until that country enjoys effective independence the Council of the League should undertake the selection of an Arab delegate from Palestine to participate in its work."

(continued...)

C. Prelude to Collapse

The Arab League took its responsibilities one step further in September 1947 when, in response to the United Nations' recommendation to partition Palestine into Arab and Jewish states, it appointed a Technical Military Committee (TMC), to oversee "Palestinian defense needs."¹⁵⁰

Many Palestinian historians believe that the Palestinian forces and their Arab allies had no chance of victory over the Zionist forces because the Arab states did not heed their own experts' warnings of Zionist military superiority and did not give the Palestinians sufficient support to overcome it.

The Palestinians looked to the Arab League to counterbalance Zionist military preponderance. But the league suffered from . . . constraints and divisiveness Its first tentative move to meet Palestinian defense needs was made in September 1947 when it formed the Technical Military Committee, headed by an Iraqi former chief of staff, General Ismail Safwat, to report on Palestinian defense requirements. Safwat's first report, submitted on October 8, was somber and realistic. He accurately assessed Zionist strength and asserted that the Palestinians possessed nothing remotely comparable to the Zionist forces "in manpower, organization, armament or ammunition." Urging the Arab states to "mobilize their utmost strength" promptly and form a general command, he warned that the Palestinians

¹⁴⁹ (...continued)

Covenant of the Arab League (Cairo: March 22, 1945), quoted in Survey of Palestine, p. 78. See also "Munadhdhamah al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestine Liberation Organization]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia] (Damascus, Syria: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984) (hereinafter "Palestinian Encyclopedia - PLO"), p. 313.

¹⁵⁰ W. Khalidi, p. 244. See also "Al-Lajnah al-'Askariyyah al-Tabi'ah li Jami'ah al-Duwal al-'Arabiyyah [The League of Arab States Military Committee]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 4 (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), pp. 30-33.

were in dire straits. The only Arab League reaction to Safwat's urgings was the allocation on October 15 of one million pounds sterling to the Technical Committee.¹⁵¹

The Arab League was hesitant about confronting Britain before the end of the Mandate on May 15, 1948. Arab leaders still held out hope that ". . . somehow the justice of the Palestinian cause would be recognized and the Western powers would not allow the worst to befall the Palestinians."¹⁵²

In December 1947, the Arab League decided to supply the TMC with ten thousand rifles and three thousand volunteers. These formed an irregular volunteer force, whose members hailed from various Arab countries, known as the Arab Liberation Army (ALA). However, it was not until the end of the British Mandate, on May 15, 1948, that regular Arab forces from Lebanon, Syria, Transjordan, Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen entered the country. By that time, it was too late for them to be of any use to the Palestinians. The Arab governments ". . . regarded the

¹⁵¹ Khalidi, pp. 308-309.

¹⁵² Id., p. 309. The 1984 edition of Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia] offers a similar assessment citing "the inability of the Arab states to understand the strategies of the great powers controlling international policy, their trust in promises, and their acceptance of delays, which resulted in their weakness in rising to the level of confronting the dangers which threatened them, while World Zionism marshalled all of its local and international capabilities in support of its strategic aims in cooperation with the great powers themselves." "Harb 1948 [The 1948 War]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, Volume 2 (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984) (hereinafter "The 1948 War"), pp. 162-163; See also H. Kilani, "Hurub Filastin al-'Arabiyyah - al-Isra'iliyyah [The Arab-Israeli Palestinian Wars]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Volume 5 (Beirut: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1990), p. 503.

assessment of their military experts as exaggerated and unwarranted. They still could not contemplate intervention by the Arab armies before the formal end of the Mandate on May 15. And when the time for intervention came, a force less than half the minimum considered necessary was all that was sent."¹⁵³

Although it took the newborn State of Israel more than a year to drive out the Arab armies and gain control of the Palestinian areas, most Palestinian leaders and historians hold to this assessment of the reasons for Israel's victory in 1948-49.¹⁵⁴ Certainly, the new generation of Palestinian leaders, which arose from among the war's refugees, shared this view.

D. Postwar Palestinian Nationalist Trends

Following the Palestinians' 1948 defeat, three major political trends developed. Two of them, the Arab Nationalists

¹⁵³ W. Khalidi., p. 313. According to the Palestinian Encyclopedia (1984), there was a "superficiality in the information available in the apparatus of the Arab army commands on the enemy forces while the Zionists knew much about the Arabs." It also describes "a lack of political participation by the military command in any discussion of the war. Its members were in a strange situation. They did not come to the decision to enter the war until a very short time before it broke out and they did not have the time to make the preparations necessary for organizing the forces." "The 1948 War," p. 162; See also Kilani, p. 502.

¹⁵⁴ See, e.g., Frangi, p. 85; Abu Iyad, My Home, My Land: A Narrative of the Palestinian Struggle (New York: Times Books, 1981) (hereinafter "Abu Iyad"), p. 12. The late PLO leader's autobiography contains first person accounts of important events in the history of the Palestinian national movement. See generally "The 1948 War," pp. 162-163; Kilani, pp. 500-510.

and the Ba'thists,¹⁵⁵ were pan-Arabist and the third, the Fatah movement, espoused a more localized nationalism. The other trends, however, continued to exist. The Arab Higher Committee continued to operate under al-Hajj Amin al-Husseini's direction until his death in 1974.¹⁵⁶

The Palestinian Communist Party - founded in 1924 - underwent a series of splits, the first of which took place in 1943, and the last of which occurred in 1982. Immediately following the 1948 war, the communist party concluded that Israel had become an established fact and that the Palestinians' battle

¹⁵⁵ The Ba'thist trend was nearly identical to that of the Arab nationalists. Both conditioned "Palestine's liberation" on the prior establishment of a unitary Arab state, both were secular movements, both blamed perceived Western domination of the region for the Arabs' problems, and both rejected any peaceful accommodation with Israel. Ba'th ideology differed from that of the Arab nationalists in that it contained the added dimension of social reform. The Ba'thists' influence on the Palestinian national movement was felt primarily in the emergence of the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF) and the Arab Liberation Front (ALF), which continue to be sponsored by the Ba'thist regimes in Syria and Iraq, respectively. The PLF, first conceived by the party's Iraqi branch in 1959, merged with the ANM's front groups in 1967 to form the PFLP. In August 1968, the PFLP's PLF faction split from the main group to form the PFLP-GC (General Command), under Ahmad Jibril's leadership. This organization split again in 1977, the breakaway faction once more adopting the name PLF.

N. 'Alush, "Fikr Harakah al-Muqawamah al-Filastiniyyah (1948-1987): Nadhrah 'Amah [The Palestinian Resistance Movement's Ideology (1948-1987): An Overview]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah (Beirut: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1990) (hereinafter "'Alush"), pp. 909-911.

¹⁵⁶ "Muhammad Amin al-Hussaini (1890-1974)," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah (Damascus: al-Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), Vol. IV, p. 142.

had to be waged against colonialism in general.¹⁵⁷ Subsequent offshoots were either integrated into Israel's political system or allied themselves with the most radical of the Palestinian nationalist organizations.¹⁵⁸

Since the influence of these groups on the Palestinian national movement in general has been minor, this section will focus on the doctrinaire Arab Nationalists Movement (ANM) and the more practical Fatah. Since the respective approaches of these organizations toward resolving the Israeli-Palestinian issue were so markedly distinct from one another, their discussion is particularly useful in introducing the movement's major political trends.

E. The PFLP's Predecessor: The Arab Nationalists' Movement (ANM)

The ANM originated in the 'Urwah al-Wuthqa ("The Indissoluble Bond") literary society, affiliated with the American University of Beirut (AUB).¹⁵⁹ The students who joined it in the late 1940's - among them, George Habash, Wadi' Haddad, Hani al-Hindi, and Ahmad al-Khatib - later formed the ANM's core leadership. Habash and Haddad, both Palestinians, had been part

¹⁵⁷ Matar, p. 31.

¹⁵⁸ 'Alush, pp. 948-952.

¹⁵⁹ K. Qasimiyyah, "Al-Mudhakkirat wa al-Sir al-Dhatiyyah al-Filastiniyyah [Treatises and the Course of Palestinian Identity]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 3 (Beirut: al-Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1990) (hereinafter "Qasimiyyah - Treatises"), p. 821.

of the mass exodus of Arab refugees from what had since become Israel.

In the wake of the 1948 defeat, the literary society expanded its horizons to include discussion of the ". . . necessity for revolution, armed action, and coups d'etat."¹⁶⁰ Al-'Urwah's members were particularly incensed by those whom they characterized as traitors and deserters, namely those who had led the fight against Israel and had failed, due to their incompetence or their apparent accommodation with the enemy. They maintained that the only appropriate response to those whom they believed had betrayed the cause was death.¹⁶¹

In March 1949, Habash and al-Hindi met with representatives of groups from Syria and Egypt with goals similar to theirs. The meeting resulted in the formation of Al-Kata'ib al-Fida' al-'Arabi (Al-Kata'ib). The group listed Arab unity and 'the liberation of Palestine' as its ultimate objectives. The Egyptian members, who had previously engaged in violent activity

¹⁶⁰ Matar, p. 23.

¹⁶¹ Id.; B.R. Al-Kubaisi, The Arab Nationalists Movement 1951-1971: From Pressure Group to Socialist Party (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1971) (hereinafter "Al-Kubaisi"), p. 37. Basil al-Kubaisi doctoral dissertation verifies other first-person and historical accounts of the ANM and offers detailed insight into its organizational structure and daily existence. Al-Kubaisi was an active ANM member and continued his association with its leadership as a PFLP operative after December 1967. His dissertation is based on interviews with former ANM members, many of whom later became PFLP leaders. Following al-Kubaisi's violent death in 1973, the PFLP lent further credibility to his dissertation by publishing an Arabic translation in its weekly magazine, Al-Hadaf. It also eulogized him as an important ANM and PFLP member.

in their own country, provided the Kata'ib with its paramilitary organization, while those from Beirut and Damascus were responsible for its ideological framework.¹⁶²

Under Al-'Urwah's organizational cover, the group trained in the clandestine use of explosives against civilian targets and carried out several successful attacks. By the summer of 1950, Habash realized that the Kata'ib's methods had failed to win them a mass following. Its organizational discipline showed signs of disintegrating. During an attempt on the life of the Syrian president, Colonel Adib al-Shishakli, the Kata'ib cell was captured and interrogated by Syrian intelligence. As a result,

¹⁶² Al-Kubaisi, p. 43. See also W. Kazziha, Revolutionary Transformation in the Arab World: Habash and his Comrades from Nationalism to Marxism (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975) (hereinafter "Kazziha"), p. 21. Kazziha's work analyzes the ANM's history from its antecedents' emergence in the late 1940's and early 1950's through the founding of its successor organization, the PFLP, in 1967. With the United Arab Republic's establishment in 1958, the ANM, assisted by Egyptian President Gamal 'abd al-Nasir, focused its efforts on helping him to unite the Arab countries into a single nationalist entity, which it hoped would shun alliances with the Western powers and marshal its resources to remove Israel from the Middle East. In doing so, the ANM made use of its contacts in the area to establish cells of activists seeking to overthrow the pro-Western governments in their respective countries, particularly those on the Arabian Peninsula. Kazziha describes the mechanics involved in establishing the ANM's Persian Gulf network, as well as the ideological debates within the organization. A former member of the ANM's Lebanese branch, Kazziha relies on his past experience within the organization, as well as on interviews with ex-activists with whom he maintains contact, to provide the reader with a dispassionate and detailed history of the organization's efforts to unite the Arab World behind the recovery of land lost to Israel in 1948; 'Alush, p. 911.

the group's core leadership, including Habash, was forced into hiding and the organization simply crumbled.¹⁶³

In early 1951, as part of his efforts to reconstitute an active organization, Habash proposed that a new nationalist clandestine organization be formed and that Al-'Urwah's executive committee members be its nucleus.¹⁶⁴ The members agreed and set about formulating a political ideology.

From 1951 until 1956, the organization formed by Al-'Urwah's executive committee did not officially exist. It was known, depending on with whom it dealt, as the Arab Nationalist Youth, the Arab Nationalists, and the Organization for Resisting Peace With Israel.¹⁶⁵ It was not until 1956, the year of its first conference, that the organization came into the open as the ANM.¹⁶⁶

From 1951 until 1954, the ANM advocated a two-phased political program. The first phase involved intensive political activity to eliminate 'Zionism and imperialism' from the Arab Middle East and to create a unified Arab state from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf. The second phase involved the

¹⁶³ Al-Kubaisi, p. 46. See also Matar, p. 29; Qasimiyyah, p. 120.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Kubaisi, p. 53. See also Kazziha, pp. 21-22.

¹⁶⁵ 'Alush, p. 911. See also Kazziha, p. 28; Qasimiyyah, pp. 114 and 120.

¹⁶⁶ Matar, p. 43. See also Kazziha, pp. 45-46. Kazziha and 'Alush give the year as 1958 (Kazziha, p. 21; 'Alush, p. 912), while Qasimiyyah maintains that it was 1957. See Qasimiyyah, p. 121.

implementation of 'socialism and democracy' in the newly-created Arab state.¹⁶⁷ While ANM doctrine sounded appealing, its critics maintained that it was too simplistic. They argued that its evolution did not proceed according to a well-considered plan and that it did not identify its allies and foes.¹⁶⁸

F. The Rise of 'Abd al-Nasir

When on July 23, 1952, Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir seized power in Egypt, Palestinian nationalists greeted him with caution, not knowing what to expect.¹⁶⁹ Up until 1956, 'Abd al-Nasir still had not formulated a pan-Arabist policy, concentrating instead on ". . . rebuilding Egypt, including its military forces . . . " and reacting to what he considered provocative Israeli raids into the Gaza Strip.¹⁷⁰

By the mid-1950's, 'Abd al-Nasir had adopted an unequivocally anti-Western and anti-Israel position. In 1955, he brought the Soviet Union into a hitherto Western-dominated Middle East with the so-called Czech arms deal, and in July 1956, he nationalized the Suez Canal. Although Egypt's armed forces were defeated in the successful Anglo-French-Israeli attempt to retake the canal in October, 'Abd al-Nasir became a hero in the eyes of nationalist Palestinians and others in the Fertile Crescent for having resisted the invaders at all. Their adulation grew as

¹⁶⁷ Al-Kubaisi, p. 54. See also Kazziha, p. 62.

¹⁶⁸ Id., p. 55.

¹⁶⁹ Brown, p. 164.

¹⁷⁰ 'Alush, p. 912.

diplomatic pressure from the United States compelled the British, French, and Israelis to withdraw their forces altogether.¹⁷¹

For 'Abd al-Nasir, the Suez Campaign highlighted the danger posed by a Western alliance with Israel for the Arab world and he consequently recognized the need to remove the Western presence and what he regarded as its foothold in the area, Israel. He intended to accomplish this by unifying the Arab World - physically and ideologically - against that presence.¹⁷² The ANM's move to Egypt in 1955, therefore, was a fortuitous event for both parties.

The ANM's sphere of operations spread to Egypt after ANM-affiliated students at AUB were expelled by the university administration for protesting the Baghdad Pact, an agreement which sought to unify a number of Middle Eastern countries in an anti-Soviet military alliance. 'Abd al-Nasir ordered Egyptian universities to admit them, affording the ANM the opportunity to expand its operations, not only into Egypt, but throughout the Middle East.¹⁷³

G. At 'Abd al-Nasir's Service: The ANM Builds a Regional Network

The ANM organization at Cairo University was able to attract students from Libya, the Sudan, Iraq, North and South Yemen, and Bahrain. It saw in these students the opportunity to build ANM

¹⁷¹ Brown, pp. 164-165. See also Kazziha, p. 59.

¹⁷² 'Alush, p. 913.

¹⁷³ Al-Kubaisi, p. 77. See also Matar, p. 55; Kazziha, pp. 43-44.

branches throughout the Middle East and North Africa and in 1959, brought them to Damascus for secret one-week courses on how to accomplish this. This resulted in the creation of armed insurgent groups in North and South Yemen, Libya, the Sudan, and Bahrain.¹⁷⁴

In February 1958, Egypt and Syria merged to form the United Arab Republic (UAR). The ANM hailed this event as an important step towards an eventual unitary Arab state and became the UAR's enthusiastic instrument. Soon after the UAR's formation, the ANM moved its headquarters to Damascus,¹⁷⁵ where its members received weapons and training from the Syrian government. It received the UAR's support in its efforts to help overthrow the Iraqi and Lebanese governments¹⁷⁶ and played an important role in the 1958 Lebanese civil war between the pro-Western government of Kamil Sham'un and local leftist organizations.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Matar, pp. 56-57. See also Al-Kubaisi, pp. 77-78; J. Jabur, "al-Bu'd al-'Arabi li al-Qadhiyyah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Cause's Arab Dimension]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 5 (Beirut: al-Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1990) (hereinafter "Jabur"), p. 787.

¹⁷⁵ Al-Kubaisi, p. 84. Kazziha contends that it was Beirut (p. 70).

¹⁷⁶ Al-Kubaisi, p. 85.

¹⁷⁷ Id., p. 86. See also L. Khaled, My People Shall Live: The Autobiography of a Revolutionary (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1973) (hereinafter "Khaled"), pp. 45-46. This is an emotional and doctrinaire memoir by one of the PFLP's most celebrated 'foot-soldiers'. She is best known for her role in the hijacking of a TWA airliner to Damascus in 1969 and the unsuccessful attempt to hijack an El Al airliner in 1970. In addition to outlining the PFLP's ideology, Ms. Khaled recounts her experiences as an ANM
(continued...)

In September 1961, Syria seceded from the UAR. The ANM blamed the secession on the ". . . feudalism-bourgeois alliance . . ." in the Syrian government (which, by definition, was opposed to Arab unity).¹⁷⁸

On July 23, 1962, the anniversary of his rise to power, 'Abd al-Nasir called for ". . . a unified Arab nationalist movement . . ." which would incorporate all existing movements of the ANM's disposition.¹⁷⁹ The ANM responded by placing its hardcore nucleus at 'Abd al-Nasir's disposal. Over the next few years, it was involved in efforts to unify Arab nationalist groups all over the Middle East under the Nasserist banner.¹⁸⁰

H. The ANM's 1963 Ideological Split: Pan Arabists versus Palestinian Provincialists

As far as its battle with Israel was concerned, however, the ANM acted independently of Egypt at this stage. This was due to an ideological split within its ranks at the 1963 ANM Congress, at which two factions formed. Non-Palestinians favored perpetuating the organization's alliance with Egypt, while Palestinians, disillusioned by the 1961 UAR schism, favored

¹⁷⁷(...continued)
activist in Lebanon and Kuwait in the 1950's and early 1960's and describes the process involved in building the PFLP's organization in Kuwait in late 1967 and early 1968.

¹⁷⁸ Al-Kubaisi, pp. 91-92.

¹⁷⁹ Id., p. 93.

¹⁸⁰ Id., p. 95.

breaking with 'Abd al-Nasir and refocusing the ANM's efforts primarily on the Palestinian issue.¹⁸¹

I. 1967: The ANM's Break with 'Abd al-Nasir and the Development of the 'Palestine First' Doctrine

The May 1964 ANM Congress resolved the dispute by forming the ". . . Palestine Region of the ANM."¹⁸² The ANM subsequently formed front groups to carry out armed actions and intelligence-gathering activities across Israel's borders. These organizations were known as Shabab al-Tha'ir (The Vengeance Youth) and Abtal al-'Awdah (Heroes of the Return).¹⁸³

The June 1967 war prompted the ANM to break with 'Abd al-Nasir completely. The ANM had initially embraced Nasserism as a means to unite the Arabs in an effort to recover what was

¹⁸¹ Id., p. 147. See also "Interview With Comrade George Habash," Democratic Palestine, No. 27, December 1987, p. 12; Qasimiyyah, p. 128; A. 'Abd al-Rahman, "Al-Nidhal al-Filastini fi Itar Munadhdhamah al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Struggle Within the PLO Framework]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 5 (Beirut: Hai'ah Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1990) (hereinafter "'Abd al-Rahman"), p. 173.

¹⁸² J. Amos, Palestinian Resistance, Organization of a Nationalist Movement (New York: Pergamon Press, 1980) (hereinafter "Amos"), pp. 72, 77. This is a comprehensive, if outdated survey of the Palestinian national movement which describes in detail its constituent organizations and their interactions with one another. Amos' introductory thumb-nail history of the Arab-Israeli dispute is particularly useful to this study. The conflict's characteristics, which he outlines, remained (at least through 1993) constant since Zionism's resurgence in the late nineteenth century and his presentation of them enhances the reader's understanding of the PFLP's ideological roots.

Kazziha sees an additional reason for the formation of the Palestine Region in the challenge to its influence among Palestinian refugees that the ANM saw in rival Palestinian organizations such as Fatah. Kazziha, p. 83-84.

¹⁸³ Id., p. 84. See also 'Abd al-Rahman, p. 177.

formerly Palestine. In the ANM's view, the Arabs', and particularly Egypt's defeat was glaring proof of 'Abd al-Nasir's inability to 'deliver Palestine.'

Immediately after the war, the ANM's executive committee met in Damascus and issued a statement which, while not referring to Egypt directly, criticized unnamed Arab governments for betraying the Palestinian cause by their apparent willingness to negotiate with Israel. It called upon Arab states to rearm and called for the arming of the general Palestinian population. The statement represented a complete break with 'Abd al-Nasir.¹⁸⁴

Both the ANM and Ba'th organizations represented the pan-Arabist trend, which conditioned Palestine's recovery on the formation of a unitary Arab state spanning the entire Middle East and North Africa. The support of such a state, they believed, would guarantee their success in this endeavor. With Israel's defeat of the Egyptian, Syrian, and Jordanian armed forces in June 1967, the disillusioned pan-Arabist Palestinians set about re-evaluating their strategy. Instead of subordinating their efforts to recovering their lost territory to establishing a unified Arab state, they instead advocated directing them exclusively towards eliminating Israel and establishing a sovereign Palestinian government in its place.

¹⁸⁴ Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine Central Information Department, "Bayan al-Lajnah al-Tanfidiyyah li al-Harakah al-Qawmiyyin al-'Arab [Statement of the ANM Executive Committee]," Sijil al-Khalidin [Register of the Immortals]: Volume I 1964-1970 (Beirut: Mu'assasah 'abd al-Hafidh al-Basat, undated), pp. 29-32.

The 'Palestine first' doctrine, however, was not new in Palestinian politics. It had first been proposed by Fatah in its 1959 founding statement. Fatah believed that the Palestinians had the right to act independently of the Arab countries. They had to play a fundamental role in liberating their country and ensure that the Arab states did not ignore their cause. The doctrine further held that the Palestinians had the right to a piece of territory on which they could establish a government. It considered ". . . the parts of Palestine still under Arab control . . ." (the West Bank and Gaza Strip) suitable for establishing a temporary entity from which it could liberate the rest of Palestine from Israeli rule.¹⁸⁵ The Palestine Liberation Organization would not officially endorse this notion until 1974.

Fatah regarded ". . . armed struggle as the only means to restore Palestine and long-term popular liberation war as a method for pursuing this means."¹⁸⁶ This concept was later adopted by the PFLP in 1967. Fatah's first strike against Israel occurred on December 31, 1964, against a pumping station of Israel's National Water Carrier. The next day, Fatah, using the cover-name Quwwat al-'Asifah (The Storm Forces), claimed

¹⁸⁵ 'Alush, p. 915.

¹⁸⁶ Id.

responsibility and announced the beginning of its armed activities.¹⁸⁷

The number of Al-'Asifah's communiques for 1965 reached 39 and its operations, together with those of other Palestinian groups continued intermittently during 1966 and the first half of 1967. These attacks, together with Israel's retaliatory strikes against the Arab countries where they had originated, elevated tensions between Israel and its Arab neighbors and led to the outbreak of the war, in June 1967,¹⁸⁸ which would result in major changes in the Palestinian national movement's strategy and operating methods.

¹⁸⁷ "Harakah al-Tahrir al-Watani al-Filastini [The Palestinian National Liberation Movement," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984) (hereinafter "Fatah"), p. 204.

¹⁸⁸ H. Cobban, The Palestinian Liberation Organization: People, Power and Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) (hereinafter "Cobban"), pp. 34-35. This is a general history of the PLO - and the Palestinian national movement - from 1948-1983. It describes the intra-organizational links among its components, as well as links with both the Arab and non-Arab states. Cobban has produced a well-documented and informative work which leaves the reader with a better understanding of both the organization's inner workings and its external relations.

Chapter 5: The PFLP Succeeds the ANM and Competes with the Dominant Fatah Movement

Following the 1967 war, both Fatah and the secular radical trend represented by the PFLP and its offshoots abandoned the concept that Palestine would be recovered through Arab unity and instead operated under the notion that Israel's destruction, and replacement by a Palestinian state, would bring about Arab unity. Instead of offering their services to a specific Arab country, the Palestinian organizations within these trends expected the full support of the Arab governments in achieving their aims. These expectations frequently conflicted with the Arab countries' policies, resulting in (often violent) confrontations with their regimes.

This section will examine, primarily, the evolution of the mainstream Palestinian movement, which has been dominated by Fatah since 1968. The PFLP's ideological evolution will be discussed when this study examines that organization's doctrine in detail. Briefly, however, the PFLP evolved from a pan-Arabist organization to a Marxist one over a twenty-year period. During the course of this evolution, a number of schisms occurred which resulted in the creation of break-away groups. Many of these groups did not survive the first few years of separation, but others, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) continue to operate and have played prominent roles in the Palestinian movement's secular radical wing.

Fatah has dominated the Palestinian movement's umbrella organization, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), since 1968. The PLO was founded in 1964 at the initiative of Egyptian President Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir.¹⁸⁹ Its first chairman was Ahmad Shuqairi, a confidant of 'Abd al-Nasir's, under whose leadership the organization appeared to be little more than a verbal outlet for Palestinian leaders and served only to enable 'Abd al-Nasir to exercise some control over the Palestinian movement. The members of its military arm, the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA), were integrated into the various Arab armies and had yet to launch an attack against Israel.¹⁹⁰ Nonetheless, the PLO drafted an early version of its covenant and established a decision-making structure, under which the Palestinian National Council (PNC) served as a quasi-parliamentary body and the Executive Committee carried out the PNC's decisions.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Frangi, p. 99.

¹⁹⁰ Frangi, p. 100.

¹⁹¹ The 1984 edition of the Palestinian Encyclopedia describes the Palestine National Council as:

the Palestine Liberation Organization's highest authority, which establishes the PLO's policy and programs. The PLO's other institutions, particularly the Executive Committee, carry out these policies and programs. The Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization is also the highest executive authority, [whose members] are chosen entirely (since the Fourth Session in 1968) from the PNC

"Al-Majlis al-Watani al-Filastini [The Palestine National Council]" in Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 4 (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), p. 94.

A. The Palestinian National Covenant Articulates the Meaning of Palestinian National Identity

At this point, an overview and explanation of the Palestinian National Covenant is appropriate, since the PLO's current and former constituent groups, including the PFLP, regard it as that organization's fundamental policy document.¹⁹² The Covenant was first drafted in 1964 and later amended in August 1968 to reflect the sweeping ideological changes that had occurred within the PLO as a result of Israel's defeat of its Arab neighbors in the June 1967 war.

The primary difference in the orientations of the two versions lies in their respective titles. The 1964 document, Al-Mithaq al-Qawmi al-Filastini, places the PLO's goals and operations within a pan-Arab context. Qawmi is translated as 'national', but only when referring to the nationalism and common bond among Arabs.¹⁹³ In this version, the PLO places primary responsibility for the success of its cause on the Arab Nation as a whole, charging it with ". . . mustering all of its military,

¹⁹² See "Munadhdhamah al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestine Liberation Organization]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 4 (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), p. 314. For the PFLP's position on the Covenant, see "PFLP Leader Says Palestinian Charter Cannot be Changed by 'Any Individual,'" Voice of the People, 1052 gmt, May 11, 1989 in British Broadcasting Corporation; Summary of World Broadcasts, May 13, 1989, p. ME/0456/A/1; "Habash fi Muqabalah ma' Roitir hawla Mawdhu' al-Mithaq al-Watani: Sanunadhilu dakhil al-Mu'assasah wa fi Itar Jamahirina li Fardh al-Mawqif al-Sahih [Habash in an Interview with Reuters: We Will Struggle Within the Institutions and in the Framework of Our Masses to Impose the Correct Stance]," Al-Hadaf, No. 959, May 31, 1989, pp. 8-9.

¹⁹³ See, e.g., Haim, p. 39.

material, and spiritual capabilities on the path of liberating Palestine and it must, in particular, provide the Palestinian Arab people with assistance and support, and provide adequate means and opportunities to enable it to carry out its role in liberating its homeland."¹⁹⁴ The PLO also undertakes to " . . . cooperate . . . with the League of Arab States to the extent that it can, and not intervene in the internal affairs of any Arab state."¹⁹⁵

The Covenant's 1964 version highlighted the inherent incongruity between the PLO's commitment to respect the Arab States' sovereignty and its long-range policy goals. This is most vividly illustrated in two contradictory provisions. Article II defines Palestine's boundaries as those which " . . . existed during the British Mandatory period . . . ,"¹⁹⁶ while article XXIV - in apparent deference to the Jordanian, Egyptian² and Syrian governments' sensibilities - promises that " . . . this organization will not exercise any local sovereignty over the West Bank, in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Gaza Strip, and in the al-Hamah region [an area just south of the Golan Heights]."¹⁹⁷ These areas were included within the British

¹⁹⁴ "Al-Mithaq al-Qawmi al-Filastini (1964) [The Palestinian National Covenant (1964)]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 4 (Damascus: Al-Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984) (hereinafter "Palestinian Encyclopedia - 1964 Covenant"), p. 405.

¹⁹⁵ Id., p. 406.

¹⁹⁶ Id., p. 404.

¹⁹⁷ Id., p. 406.

Mandatory boundaries before 1948. This promise was dropped from the 1968 version - written in the wake of Palestinian post-1967 disillusionment with Pan-Arab nationalism - due to the PLO's decision to assert its claim to these areas.¹⁹⁸

The changes which the Palestinian National Covenant's 1968 version, al-Mithaq al-Watani al-Filastini, reflected the PLO's new attitude toward Pan-Arabism and the Arab countries. Like qawmi, watani also means 'national' in Arabic, but in the provincial sense.¹⁹⁹ It is the adjectival form of the noun watan, which means 'fatherland' or 'homeland', and is roughly equivalent to the French word patrie.²⁰⁰ The first of these changes appears in article I, which characterizes Palestine as ". . . the homeland [watan] of the Palestinian Arab people," replacing the 1964 version, which described Palestine as ". . . an Arab homeland."²⁰¹ Not only did the PLO proclaim the primacy of the Palestinian cause, but made Palestine's liberation an obligation of the entire Arab nation, stating in article XV that ". . . the Arab nation must rally all of its military,

¹⁹⁸ "Al-Mithaq al-Watani al-Filastini (1968) [The Palestinian National Covenant (1968)]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 4 (Damascus: Al-Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984) (hereinafter "Palestinian Encyclopedia - Covenant 1968"), p. 410. See also "Wathiqah: al-Mithaq al-Watani al-Filastini li Munadhdhamah al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyyah [Document: The Palestinian National Covenant of the Palestine Liberation Organization]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1162, September 19, 1993, pp. 34-35.

¹⁹⁹ Haim, p. 39, op. cit..

²⁰⁰ Hourani, Arabic Thought, pp. 80-81.

²⁰¹ Palestinian Encyclopedia - Covenant 1968, p. 406.

human, material, and spiritual capabilities in order to participate effectively with the Palestinian Arab people in the liberation of Palestine. It must, especially at the current stage of the armed Palestinian revolution, make every effort to give the Palestinian people all assistance and material and human support and provide it with all of the suitable means and opportunities to allow it to continue to carry out its vanguard role in pursuing its armed revolution until the liberation of its homeland."²⁰²

While the PLO committed itself to cooperating with the Arab states to the extent that it could, this cooperation would be offered in light of its own needs (article XVII) It undertook, in the same article, not to interfere in their internal affairs. At the same time, the PLO insisted on being allowed to operate independently, with article XVIII affirming ". . . the firmness and independence of the [Palestinian people's] national revolution and rejects [sic] all forms of interference, tutelage, and dependency."²⁰³

Apart from declaring its independence of the influence of Arab governments, the PLO also became more assertive in its embrace of the notion of 'liberating Palestine' through armed force. The addition of the principle that ". . . armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine and is, therefore, a strategy and not a tactic . . ." (article IX), reflected the

²⁰² Id., p. 408.

²⁰³ Id., p. 409.

PLO's disillusionment with pan-Arabism, as well as its new-found confidence in Palestinian fighting capabilities - in the wake of what it perceived as a 'victory' of its forces over the Israeli army at the battle of al-Karamah in March 1968 (see below).²⁰⁴

When it adopted armed struggle as the only means of confronting and defeating Israel, the PLO also refused to concede Israel's right to exist in any form, rejecting, in article XI, ". . . all solutions which are intended to replace the complete liberation of Palestine and all enterprises intended to either liquidate or internationalize the Palestinian cause."²⁰⁵

In a similar vein, the 1968 version retained the 1964 covenant's provisions that ". . . the partition of Palestine in 1948, and Israel's establishment, are null and void, whatever time has elapsed, because they are at variance with the Palestinian people's will and their natural right to their homeland, and contradict the principles embodied in the United Nations Charter, especially the right of self-determination [article XIX]" and that ". . . claims of an historical or spiritual connection between the Jews and Palestine concur neither with the facts of history nor with the attributes of a state as these are correctly understood. The Jews constitute a revealed religion [dinan samawiyyan], and not a nationality with an independent existence. In addition, the Jews do not constitute a single branch [shu'bah] with an independent

²⁰⁴ Id., p. 407.

²⁰⁵ Id., pp. 408-409.

identity, but are citizens of the states to which they belong [article XX]."²⁰⁶ With these provisions, the PLO appeared to reject any acceptance of Israel as an independent state with a legitimate Jewish national character.

Despite the Covenant's ostensible rigidity on these points, it contains an 'escape clause' which would allow the PLO to change its position on recognition of Israel. Article XXXIII states that ". . . this covenant cannot be amended except by a two-thirds majority of the members of the PLO's Palestinian National Council, at a special session called for that purpose."²⁰⁷ When, in May 1989, PLO chairman Yasir 'Arafat vaguely implied that the Covenant was void or obsolete, he appeared to be doing so in order to assuage American and Israeli concerns that the PLO had, in truth, not recognized Israel, despite its formal statement of recognition in January.

Adding to the confusion was a statement by the PLO's 'ambassador' to Tunisia, Hakam Bal'awi, reported by KUNA on May 5, 1989:

In an interview with the Tunisian paper AL-SABAH today, he said that 'Arafat's use of the French word 'caduque,' which means null and void, obsolete and antiquated, when talking about the Palestinian National Charter to the French media did not at all mean the nullification of the charter.

He added that the word had various established definitions in the dictionary and that it was up to the West to choose which one it wants. He said that the Palestinian leadership has the right to stick to the

²⁰⁶ Id., p. 408.

²⁰⁷ Id., p. 410.

definitions that it believes are correct and which embody the meanings it wants to convey.²⁰⁸

Nearly one year later, 'Arafat effectively retracted his renunciation of the Covenant when he affirmed ". . . the necessity of aiding and supporting the Palestinian Arab people's struggle until the complete liberation of Palestine from the river to the sea."²⁰⁹

The exact meaning of 'Arafat's apparent renunciation of the Covenant was not clear at the time. It certainly did not carry the import of a formal renunciation since no special PNC meeting had been called. Whether or not 'Arafat would have obtained the two-thirds majority vote required to amend the Covenant is also unclear. On September 10, 1993, as Israel and the PLO moved closer to signing an agreement on the framework for negotiations, 'Arafat sent Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin a letter which, among other things, renounced the use of terrorism and violence in resolving Palestinian differences with Israel. This renunciation was made without the PNC's approval,²¹⁰ prompting

²⁰⁸ Kuwait KUNA in Arabic, 1325 gmt, May 6, 1989 in FBIS-NES-89-087, May 8, 1989, p. 3.

²⁰⁹ "Bi Ihtifal fi Libya bi Dhikra 'Abu Jihad': 'Arafat yad'u li Tahrir Filastin min al-Nahr li al-Bahr. Al-Munadhdhamah tutalibu Urubba bi al-Tasdi li al-Qam' al-Isra'ili [At a Celebration in Libya Commemorating 'Abu Jihad': Arafat Calls for the Liberation of Palestine from the River to the Sea. The PLO Asks Europe to Resist Israeli Repression], " Al-Ittihad, May 2, 1990, p. 7.

²¹⁰ See Letter from Y. 'Arafat to Y. Rabin (September 9, 1993) (recognizing Israel's right to exist and renouncing the use of terrorism). See also "Text of Rabin Remarks at Signing Ceremony," Reuters, September 10, 1993.

the PFLP's withdrawal from the PLO and its characterization of the organization as illegitimate under 'Arafat's leadership and capitulatory to the enemy.²¹¹

'Arafat's 1990 affirmation of the need to liberate Palestine in its entirety expressed sentiments similar to those which he held when he assumed the chairmanship of the PLO in 1969.

Between the summers of 1967 and 1968, Palestinians underwent a transformation in their self-perception. Israel's victory in June 1967 had discredited 'Abd al-Nasir's leadership and, because of his ties to 'Abd al-Nasir, Shuqairi's as well. Shuqairi's successor Yahya Hammudah fared no better and was replaced at the Fifth PNC - held in Cairo in February 1969 - by 'Arafat, who remains the PLO's chairman.²¹²

B. Fatah Takes Control of the PLO; the PFLP Vies for Attention Through Spectacular Operations

The event believed most directly responsible for Fatah's ascension within the PLO to dominate that organization is the battle between IDF units and Palestinian combatants at the Jordanian border town of al-Karamah in March 1968. According to official Palestinian historical memory, it was at al-Karamah that armed Palestinians engaged the Israelis, who had come to destroy their positions and fighting capabilities, and drove them back

²¹¹ "Radicals Praise Fatah Dissidents," Reuters, November 30, 1993. See also "Palestinian Groups Opposed to Autonomy Accord Form New Alliance," Agence France Presse, December 16, 1993.

²¹² "Al-Majlis al-Watani al-Filastini [The Palestinian National Council]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 4 (Damascus: al-Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), pp. 101-104. See also Abu Iyad, p. 65.

after inflicting heavy losses on them. The Palestinian refugees, who had hitherto considered themselves powerless before Israel's military might, experienced a surge in self-confidence and enlisted in Fatah combat units in droves.²¹³ The tremendous increase in manpower enabled Fatah to expand its power-base and set up combat facilities (together with the support services that these required),²¹⁴ in Jordan, which shared the longest border of any Arab state with Israel.

C. Expulsion from Jordan

Almost from the beginning, the Palestinian organizations in Jordan sought to increase their degree of autonomy and freedom of action within the country so that, eventually, they were effectively an authority unto themselves. Tensions climaxed in September 1970, when the PFLP simultaneously hijacked four

²¹³ "Al-Karamah (Ma'rakah -) [Al-Karamah (Battle -)]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia] (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), Vol. 3, pp. 636-638.

According to Abu Ahmad Fu'ad, head of the PFLP's armed operations, "[t]his battle constituted a watershed in the activity of the resistance and brought from its partial openness to complete openness. It constituted the first great victory in terms of guerrilla warfare and widened the masses' embrace of [guerrilla warfare as a means of struggle]." See Abu Ahmad Fu'ad, "Al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir Filastin: 'Ishrun 'Aman 'ala Tariq Harb al-Sha'biyyah Tawil al-Amd [The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine: Twenty Years on the Road of Long-term Popular Liberation War]," Al-Hadaf, No. 892, December 21, 1987, p. 97 (hereinafter "Abu Ahmad Fu'ad").

²¹⁴ Frangi, pp. 110-112. See also 'A. Hamdan, "Ashkaliyyah al-Watani wa al-Qawmi fi Masar al-Thawrah al-Filastiniyyah al-Mu'asirah [The Modern Palestinian Revolution's Nationalist and Pan-Arab Ambiguities]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1082, December 22, 1991, p. 70 (hereinafter "Hamdan").

its Lebanese supporters within its territory which supported the cross-border attacks against Israel.

The Cairo agreement, signed in November 1969, was designed to regulate the PLO's presence and actions in Lebanon, but in reality, only increased the PLO's freedom of action without safeguarding Lebanon's sovereignty.²¹⁶ A cursory glance at the agreement's main provisions confirms this. First, it legitimized Palestinian civilian presence in the refugee camps in southern Lebanon. While the refugees' movements had previously been restricted to the region - and closely monitored and controlled by the Lebanese Deuxieme Bureau counterintelligence organization - Palestinian civilians were now permitted to move freely about the entire country. Secondly, the agreement allowed Palestinians living in Lebanon to join ". . . resistance organizations." This provision included the right to engage in operations against Israel from Lebanon. The Lebanese government agreed to all of this with the understanding that the Palestinian organizations would not violate Lebanese sovereignty.²¹⁷ The PLO, however,

²¹⁶ I. Rabinovitch, The War for Lebanon: 1970-1985 (London: Cornell University Press, 1985) (hereinafter "Rabinovitch"), p. 41. Formerly an academic at the University of Tel Aviv - and currently Israel's ambassador to the United States - Professor Rabinovitch traces the Lebanese Civil War's roots and development and analyzes the PLO's role in the conflict. See also J. and J. Wallach, Arafat: In the Eyes of the Beholder (New York: Carol Publishing Company, 1990) (hereinafter "Wallach and Wallach"), pp. 219-220.

²¹⁷ G. Bekhor, Leksikon Ashaf: Ishim, Irgunim ve Eru'im [The PLO Lexicon: Personalities, Organizations and Events] (Tel Aviv: Misrad Habitahon - Hahotsa'ah La'or [Ministry of Defense - Publishing], 1991) (hereinafter "Bekhor"), pp. 297-298. This
(continued...)

effectively established a mini-state in southern Lebanon and assumed quasi-governmental powers which included law-enforcement, provision of social services, and even tax collection. PLO decrees applied to the area's Lebanese, as well as Palestinian residents.²¹⁸

The Palestinian organizations (particularly the PFLP) also became involved in Lebanese politics, siding with Sunni Muslim and leftist Lebanese, who strongly supported the Palestinian cause.²¹⁹ This further polarized Lebanese society, which was

²¹⁷ (...continued)

reference work contains descriptions and histories of all of the Palestinian national movement's factions and leaders, as well as articles on related diplomatic, cultural, military, and political issues. Bekhor's style is detached and analytical as he attempts to explain the Palestinian viewpoint to his fellow Israelis. The fact that the Israeli Defense Ministry published the Lexicon has not diluted its objectivity and Bekhor's conclusions are, in many cases, at variance with the government's official position. See also F. Jabber, "The Palestinian Resistance and Inter-Arab Politics," in W. Quandt et. al., The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism (London: University of California Press, 1973) (hereinafter "Jabber"), p. 193.

²¹⁸ G. Bekhor, Leksikon Ashaf: Ishim, Irgunim ve Eru'im [The PLO Lexicon: Personalities, Organizations, and Events] (Tel Aviv: Misrad Habitahon -Hotsa'ah La'or [Ministry of Defense - Publishing], 1991) (hereinafter "Bekhor"), p. 297.

²¹⁹ While Fatah sought only to extend its freedom of action in Lebanon (and negotiated with the Lebanese Phalangist government for the right to do so See Abu Iyad, p. 161), the PFLP called for its overthrow. See "Al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah wa Ahdath Tishrin al-Lubnaniyyah wa Qadhaya al-Thawrah al-Filastiniyyah [The Popular Front, the October Lebanese Events, and Issues of the Palestinian Revolution]," Al-Hadaf, No. 19, November 29, 1969, p. 9.

already deeply divided among these groups, pro-western Maronite Christian organizations, and the Shi'ite community.²²⁰

Lebanon, unlike Jordan, did not possess a cohesive government,²²¹ a strong army, and a reliable source of outside support, such as the United States or Britain. Israel's retaliation for PLO attacks originating in Lebanon divided the population among those who supported the Palestinians against Israel and those who blamed them for Israel's retaliatory strikes and wanted their activities severely curbed. These local factors, combined with the new diplomatic situation which the October 1973 war brought about (the PLO's rising international status, the prospects for an Arab-Israeli peace settlement, and

²²⁰ R. Khalidi, Under Siege: PLO Decisionmaking During the 1982 War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986) (hereinafter "R. Khalidi"), p. 20. University of Chicago professor and Palestinian-American Rashid Khalidi describes the PLO's involvement in the events which led to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and analyzes the organization's decisions and actions in combatting it. See also F. Jabber, "The Palestinian Resistance and Inter-Arab Politics," in W. Quandt et.al., The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism (London: University of California Press, 1973) (hereinafter "Jabber"), pp. 193-194.

²²¹ Following the 1958 civil war, Lebanon's new president, Fu'ad Shihab, kept the peace between the country's pro-Western Maronite Christians and its pan-Arab nationalists by virtue of his personal prestige, charismatic personality, military power base, and neutral political posture. Despite his Maronite background, he managed to maintain a balance between his country's Christian and Arab nationalist orientation. Charles Hilu, who succeeded Shihab in 1964, did not have his predecessor's dominant personality. Hilu was unable to maintain a stable majority in parliament and his relationships with that body and his prime minister were insufficiently strong for him to be an effective president. Rabinovitch, pp. 28-31. Hilu's presidency, under which affairs were decided "through manipulation and intrigue," (*Id.*, p. 39) ended in 1970, by which time the PLO managed to establish a strong military presence in Lebanon.

inter-Arab disputes) raised the level of Lebanon's internal tensions and created the conditions for the beginning of its civil war in 1975.²²²

E. The 1973 Arab-Israeli War: A Prelude to Palestinian Diplomacy

The October 1973 war between Israel and its immediate neighbors, Egypt and Syria resulted in disengagement accords in both the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights and signaled the beginning of a process which would produce an Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty in 1979. Following Anwar al-Sadat's surprise attack on Israel on October 6, the PLO's dominant Fatah faction realized to its dismay that the Egyptian leader had not intended to liberate Palestine, but only to create the conditions which would prompt the Israeli government to negotiate with him for the return of the Sinai to Egyptian sovereignty. It became clear to the Fatah leadership that the Arab states were either unable or unwilling to defeat Israel through armed force and that it would have to achieve its objective through the peace process itself.²²³

The process, based on the notion of 'territory for peace' - which Arab governments interpreted as Israel's withdrawal from the territory which it captured during the 1967 war in exchange for peace treaties - offered certain advantages which the Palestinian organizations could exploit politically and militarily.

²²² Rabinovitch, pp. 42-43.

²²³ Cobban, p. 61.

The Twelfth PNC, held in the summer of 1974, recognized these advantages in clause two of the ten point program which it adopted:

The PLO will struggle by every means, the foremost of which is armed struggle, to liberate Palestinian land and to establish the people's national, independent and fighting sovereignty on every part of Palestinian land to be liberated. This requires the creation of further changes in the balance of power in favour of our people and their struggle.²²⁴

Based on this ten-point program, in which the PLO accepted the notion of a negotiated Israeli withdrawal, the October 1974 Arab Summit Conference in Rabat, Morocco recognized the PLO as the Palestinians' sole legitimate representative.²²⁵

The PLO's new status, however, was not inviolable. The 1978 Camp David accords, signed by Egypt, Israel, and the United States, produced a situation in which the PLO was effectively excluded from participating in any peace arrangement with Israel involving the Palestinians, specifying that the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip would govern themselves in all areas except for defense and foreign affairs. Israel, in turn, would withdraw from the territories' populated areas to mutually agreed-upon strategic locations. The accords did not specify the fate of either the PLO or Palestinians living outside

²²⁴ Quoted in Cobban, p. 62, in Palestinian Encyclopedia - PNC, pp. 112-113, and in D.L. Price, Jordan and Palestinians: The PLO's Prospects (Appendix A), No. 66, (December 1975), p. 14.

²²⁵ Cobban, p. 62. See also Hamdan, p. 72.

those areas. Predictably, both Fatah and the PFLP rejected the Camp David formula.²²⁶

F. The 1982 Israeli Invasion of Lebanon Forces Palestinian Organizations to Relocate Once More; Limits Their Ability to Exercise the Military Option

The 1982 Israeli incursion into Lebanon further weakened the PLO by denying it a base from which to direct its operations. Fatah's relocation to Tunis and the PFLP's move to Damascus distanced both organizations from Israel's northern border, although their units continued to operate in the country, and Lebanese Shi'ite groups - which had hitherto been hostile to the Palestinians and tolerant of Israel - attacked Israeli forces and shelled northern towns more zealously than the PLO ever had.

From 1984 until 1986, 'Arafat, with few options remaining, explored the possibility of establishing a Palestinian confederation with Jordan on the West Bank. The PFLP², however, regarded this as treason and took steps to torpedo the process by denouncing 'Arafat as a traitor and carrying out a campaign of intimidation and assassination against West Bank Palestinian leaders who favored the concept.

²²⁶ The Camp David accords, signed on September 17, 1978, were rejected unanimously, on the following day, by the PLO's executive committee and "... that even the more moderate PLO figures who had been hoping for some role in the peace initiative launched by Mr. Sadat, were convinced by the terms of the Camp David declarations that the initiative offered them no benefits." Cobban, p. 100. In March 1979, Fatah's Salah Khalaf rejected the Camp David formula even more emphatically, stating: "It's not just that we won't participate! We will sabotage the self-rule scheme and we will sabotage the whole results [sic] of Camp David." Id., pp. 102-103.

The Palestinian cause appeared inert, its leadership apparently weak and divided. This began to change at the beginning of 1988, when world attention shifted to the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who by then were rioting on a massive scale against the Israeli presence in those territories.

These riots differed from those which confronted Israel in the past in that they were guided by an underground leadership composed of the four predominant secular Palestinian groups in the area (Fatah, the PFLP, the DFLP, and the Palestinian Communist Party) and a separate Islamic wing, under the leadership of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement or Hamas. They were to be commonly known as the intifadah, or uprising.

Chapter 6: The Palestinian National Movement Since 1988

The uprising, by shifting world attention to the Palestinian leadership developing in the territories, prompted the PLO to take steps to recover its pre-eminent role in the Palestinian movement. The Palestinian population in the territories, despairing of any progress by the PLO in advancing their cause, had apparently taken matters into their own hands when they began their revolt. There were a number of reasons for this. To begin with, there was a discernible lack of progress in advancing the Palestinian cause in the international arena. From the Palestinian point of view, the United States was displaying its usual inflexibility in its unwillingness to pressure Israel into making concessions. The Soviet Union was preoccupied with other matters, such as contending with the Strategic Defense Initiative and negotiating nuclear arms reductions with the United States.²²⁷ Israel continued to reject the convening of an international Middle East peace conference. The Arab countries, for their part, no longer attached the same importance to the Palestinian cause that they once had, confining their support for it to declarations. Furthermore, the outside leadership's seeming inability to help them engendered the belief among Palestinians in the territories that they were truly isolated from the rest of the world and that any improvement in their circumstances would result from their initiative alone.²²⁷

²²⁷ S. Al-Hut, "Mulhaq: Al-Intifadhah wa Tatawwur al-Qadhiyyah al-Filastiniyyah (1987-1988) [Appendix: The Uprising (continued...)]

The Palestinians who led the uprising differed from their elders in that they had known only the Israelis as occupiers. Their parents, who, prior to 1967, had lived under Jordanian rule in similar circumstances, had learned to live with the Israeli occupation as well.

As early as 1986, this new generation, alarmed at the growing number of Israeli settlements in the territories and frustrated by the government's restrictions on their physical movement and economic opportunities, began, at their own initiative, to commit violent acts against Israeli citizens and Arabs whom they accused of collaborating with the authorities. Palestinians in the territories were encouraged by the Lebanese National Resistance Front's (LNRF) successful operations against Israeli forces and their Lebanese allies in southern Lebanon in the summer of 1987. They were also heartened by the PFLP-GC's hang-glider infiltration of an operative over the Lebanese border in November of that year. The PFLP-GC operative succeeded in killing six Israeli soldiers and wounding nine before Israeli soldiers shot him dead. These incidents undermined the Palestinians' perception of the IDF as an infallible and invincible force. Increased confidence, as well as a strong desire to rid themselves of Israeli rule, motivated the

²²⁷ (...continued)
and the Development of the Palestinian Cause (1987-1988)], " Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 6 (Beirut: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1990) (hereinafter "Al-Hut"), p. 993.

Palestinian residents of the territories to revolt against Israel's presence there.²²⁸

A. Causes of the Palestinian Uprising

There is some controversy over whether or not the PLO's diaspora leadership was either wholly or partially responsible for the uprising's outbreak on December 9 and its conduct during the months that followed. Israeli analysts and intelligence officials maintain that the riots which sparked it were spontaneous, although they concede that the underground Palestinian leadership in the territories had been planning some kind of revolt for months in advance.²²⁹ Neither the local leadership nor the PLO, they maintain, knew exactly when the revolt would commence and in any case, the local PLO leadership had made its plans independently of the decision-makers in the diaspora.²³⁰ Shafiq al-Hut, however, writing for the PLO-financed Palestinian Encyclopedia, holds that the local PLO leadership had coordinated its activities and statements with the PLO in Tunis from the very beginning and accuses Israel of attempting to separate the diaspora leadership from the Palestinian leadership in the territories.²³¹

²²⁸ Al-Hut, pp. 995-996.

²²⁹ Bekhor, p. 41.

²³⁰ Id., p. 42.

²³¹ Al-Hut, pp. 1000-1001. Dr. Ariel Merari, of the University of Tel Aviv, points out that PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat admitted, in late December 1987, that "the PLO could not claim to be the initiator of the uprising, rather it should be
(continued...)

Whichever argument has greater merit, there was a clear separation between the Palestinians in the territories who made up the United National Leadership of the Uprising (UNL) - those who directed the revolt 'on the ground' - and the PLO in Tunis, which seemed to be outlining the uprising's broad strategy. The UNL consisted of local representatives of the organizations which sat on the PLO's Executive Committee in the diaspora: Fatah, the PFLP, the DFLP, and the Palestinian Communist Party. Also involved in the uprising, but distancing itself from the UNL and the PLO in general, was the Islamic Resistance Movement or Hamas, which rejected compromise not only with Israel, but Jews in general. Hamas resisted joining the UNL because of the umbrella organization's secular orientation (See below).²³² Whether or not the PLO leadership in Tunis was involved in the uprising's outbreak, it quickly strengthened its ties with the local leadership by establishing direct contact with them, rallying both Arab and world support for the activists, funneling money to them, and broadcasting statements intended to raise their morale.²³³

²³¹ (...continued)
credited 'to the people' (Some of Arafat's later declarations, however, contradicted this statement.)." A. Merari, et. al., "The Palestinian Intifada: An Analysis of a Popular Uprising After Seven Months," Terrorism and Political Violence, 1989, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 177-201, citing Ha'aretz, December 30, 1987.

²³² Bekhor, pp. 43-44.

²³³ Al-Hut, p. 1001.

B. Declaration of a Palestinian State (November 1988)

It is generally agreed that the November 1988 PNC session in Algiers was a culmination of the PLO's efforts to register some sort of political gain for the Palestinian cause after nearly a year of violence and unrest in the territories. There the PLO declared itself a government in exile and announced the birth of the 'State of Palestine'.

Conventional wisdom among Israeli analysts holds that the members of the PLO leadership declared Palestinian statehood in response to pressure from their counterparts in the territories for a tangible achievement to justify the sacrifices which the Palestinians had made there since the previous December. The PLO, out of fear that it might lose its primacy in the Palestinian national movement, complied. In August, Faisal al-Husseini, head of the Arab Studies Center in Jerusalem, published a document which called for the declaration of Palestinian independence based on co-existence with Israel. At first, the PLO derided it as ". . . intellectual amusement," but later adopted its principles in their entirety, recognizing UN Security Council Resolutions 181 (the 1947 proposal to partition Palestine into Arab and Jewish states) and 242 (which calls for Israel's withdrawal from territories acquired in 1967 in exchange for peace) as the bases for negotiation with Israel.²³⁴

Al-Hut mentions no such pressure. Rather, he holds that there was collective discussion among all of the PLO's components

²³⁴ Bekhor, pp. 83-84.

(without distinguishing between those inside or outside of the territories). He does not mention al-Husseini's role and additionally maintains that the PLO's Central Committee had discussed re-examining Resolution 242, well before the November PNC, at its session in Baghdad in January 1988.²³⁵

While all Arab countries and most third world nations recognized the Palestinian 'state', most Western European countries withheld their recognition since it did not control a piece of territory. It did, however, enhance the PLO's status and prompted the United States to announce its willingness to begin a dialogue with the PLO if the organization recognized Israel's right to exist and renounced the use of terrorism.

While the PLO maintained that it had implicitly done this in its declaration of independence, the United States insisted that it do so explicitly. The PLO accomplished this, to the satisfaction of the United States, in December 1988²³⁶ and a

²³⁵ Al-Hut, pp. 1039-1040.

²³⁶ The PLO had implicitly favored Palestinian participation in the peace process since the 1974 PNC, when it vowed that it would "... continue, by all means, primarily armed struggle, to liberate the Palestinian land and to establish an independent national authority on any part of the Palestinian land liberated." "Al-Majlis al-Watani al-Filastini [The Palestinian National Council]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 4 (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), p. 112. With the advent of the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1987, however, the issue of recognizing Israel took on vital importance when it became clear to the PLO leadership that the residents of these areas (who were now on the front lines in the struggle against Israel) would no longer take them seriously if they did not achieve immediate political gains for the Palestinian cause. The residents of the territories realized, even if the PLO leadership

(continued...)

dialogue began. This dialogue lasted until the spring of 1990, when the PLF, a PLO faction, attacked a crowded Tel Aviv beach with automatic weapons. When the PLO failed to denounce the attack, the United States interpreted this as advocacy by the

²³⁶ (...continued)

did not, that Israel was a fact of life in the Middle East with which peace had to be made. Bekhor, p. 168. The first public expression of this sentiment came from Palestinian political activist Faisal al-Husseini, who, in August 1988, spoke of declaring Palestinian independence and negotiating with the Israeli government in order to determine the final borders between the Palestinian state and Israel. Id. In November 1988, the nineteenth PNC first recognized that UN resolution 181, which in 1947, called for Palestine's partition into Arab and Jewish states, "... continues to provide the condition for international legitimacy which includes the Palestinian Arab people's right to national sovereignty and independence." "I'lan al-Istiqlal [The Declaration of Independence]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 6 (Beirut: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1990), pp. 1062-1063. Although this recognition appeared to violate article XIX of the Palestinian National Covenant, which voided this resolution, it was further indication of the PLO's desire to be part of the Arab-Israeli peace process. The PNC also recognized UN resolutions 242 and 338 as "... the basis for convening the international [Middle East peace] conference," as well as Israel's right to secure and recognized borders within the framework of peace. Bekhor, pp. 168-169. See Al-Hut, pp. 1042-1043. In the view of the United States government, however, the PLO had still not explicitly recognized Israel's right to exist and during the next month, indirectly prodded the organization, through the Swedish government, to unequivocally recognize the Jewish State. On December 13, 1988, at a special session of the UN General Assembly in Geneva, PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat declared his organization's readiness to work for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict encompassing all parties, "... including the State of Palestine, Israel, and the other neighbors, within the framework of the international peace conference, based on resolutions 242 and 338 ... while respecting everyone's right to exist in peace and security." Bekhor, p. 169. See Al-Hut, pp. 1045-1048. The next day, the United States began direct political discussions with the PLO.

organization of terrorism as a legitimate means to achieve its aims and broke off direct contact with it.²³⁷

The PLO's political position was further weakened that year when it openly supported Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August. The PLO continued its support for Iraq even after the United States began its armed offensive to restore Kuwaiti sovereignty.

C. The Effect of the 1990-1991 Gulf War on the Middle East in General and the PLO in Particular

At war's end, the PLO had no effective means at its disposal to force Israel to withdraw from the territories. No Arab country would allow the use of its territory for armed attacks against Israel and the Israelis had weakened the Palestinians' ability to conduct an effective resistance campaign in the West Bank and Gaza. The PLO's international standing had also declined significantly because of its support for Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

The Soviet Union's dissolution also had a tremendous impact on the Middle East political equation. Not only had the radical Arab states and the Palestinian organizations lost their principal patron, but Israel's role as an anti-Soviet outpost for

²³⁷ G. Mas'ud, "Ta'liq al-Hiwar al-Amriki - al-Filastini: Ab'ada min Idanah 'al-Irhab' wa aqraba ila I'lan al-Nafir [Commentary on the American-Palestinian Dialogue: Moving Away from 'Terrorism' and Moving Closer to a Call to Battle]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1012, July 1, 1990, pp. 6-7. See also "Israel Kills at Least Two Arab Guerrillas North of Border," AP, June 23, 1990; S. Gabai, "Hamlatzah Be'ashaf: Lesaleq et al-'Abbas mi Tzameret Ha'irgun Biglal Ahraiuto Lefigu'a Hakoshel Behof Nitzanim [Recommendation in the PLO to Expel al-'Abbas from the Organization's Top Leadership for his Responsibility for the Failed Attack on Nitzanim Beach]," Ma'ariv, September 11, 1991, p. A2.

the West had become obsolete. Although Israel remained a source of intelligence on anti-Western political movements in the area, the removal of the Soviet element substantially reduced the Jewish State's strategic value for the United States. During the Gulf war, the United States feared that Israel's entry into the battle would prompt key Arab members of the anti-Iraq coalition to either withdraw or switch sides and in that sense, regarded Israel as a liability. While previous U.S. presidents had refrained from applying effective pressure on Israel on issues such as Israel's settlement policy in the territories, George Bush used the prospect of denying Israel's request for badly-needed loan guarantees (ultimately unsuccessfully) in an attempt to enjoin the Israeli government from constructing new settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. With Israel and its Arab neighbors uncertain of whether or not they would receive outside support for their current policies, the United States believed that it would be able to persuade them to change those policies and negotiate a comprehensive peace settlement.

Despite pressure from the United States to moderate its negotiating stance, Israel was able to adhere to its position of refusing to negotiate with the PLO; and despite the Labor Party's victory in 1992, the Israeli government did not alter its position and continued to consider the PLO a terrorist organization bent on its destruction. It continued to insist on dealing only with representatives of the Palestinians living in the territories. These representatives, however, since the start

of the peace negotiations in Autumn 1991, maintained that they took direction from the PLO. Consequently, the PLO, its constituent groups, and the organizations which opposed the peace talks continued to be important factors in the outcome of the negotiations.

D. The Palestinian Organizations on the Eve of the 1991 Madrid Conference

The Palestinian organizations, at the time, represented a broad spectrum of views on what Palestinians were entitled to receive in a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. These ranged from advocacy of Israel's disappearance - and repossession by the Palestinians of all Israeli-controlled territory - to sovereignty over a portion of the Palestinians' territorial claims and peaceful coexistence with Israel.

It is difficult to place any single Palestinian group's position, at the time, firmly within either of these extremes or even within one of the intermediate shades of opinion. While an organization may have appeared to espouse one viewpoint, it may also have had a hidden agenda with an entirely different aim. An organization's doctrine, therefore, deserves close examination before conclusively identifying its position on a given issue.

Each of the numerous Palestinian organizations claimed to be working to regain land lost to Israel over the past four decades and to establish an independent Palestinian state on it. Whether viewed as moderate or extreme, almost every organization maintained an armed force subject to no authority other than that of its leadership. It would have been very difficult, for

example, for Yasir 'Arafat to prevent the fiercely independent George Habash from ordering his PFLP operatives to attack a given target and Habash (a Marxist) had no influence over the actions of Hamas operatives (who are devout Sunni Muslims). While most of the organizations regularly sent solidarity greetings to one another, and often issued joint statements when their interests overlapped,²³⁸ each jealously guarded its freedom of action. When their interests did not overlap, violent clashes sometimes occurred.²³⁹

²³⁸ S. Aboudi, "Radical Arabs Step Up Opposition to Mideast Conference," Reuters, October 21, 1991; "Fundamentalists, PLO Radicals Reject Peace Talks," Reuters, October 21, 1991; P. Bakogeorge, "Middle East Conference: Tensions Rise as Israel Accepts Talks," Ottawa Citizen, October 21, 1991, p. A1; "One Palestinian Killed, 35 Wounded in Clashes With Israeli Troops," Agence France Presse, October 30, 1991; "Palestinians Strike Second Day Against Conference," Agence France Presse, October 31, 1991.

²³⁹ On April 3, 1990, for example, Fatah and PFLP activists came to blows in the West Bank village of 'Awarta, outside Nablus, which culminated in the gutting of six Arab-owned houses by the PFLP.

S. Aboudi, "Palestinians Challenge Israel to Accept Peace Conference," Reuters, April 4, 1990. See also "Palestinian Nationalists Torch West Bank Houses," Reuters, April 4, 1990; J. Diehl, "Palestinians Split on U.S. Plan for Talks With Israel," Washington Post, April 14, 1990, pp. A10 and A12.

Following the signing of an Israeli-PLO draft accord on autonomy for Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, clashes broke out on September 3, 1993 between Fatah and PFLP supporters in Rafah when "[t]he Fatah Hawks group shot at the Red Eagles band of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), who had painted graffiti opposing any agreement with Israel."

S. Saxe, "Arab Violence Erupts against Peace with Israel," Reuters, September 3, 1993. See also "Hamas will not Attack PLO over Deal with Israel," Reuters, September 4, 1993; "PLO Leader (continued...)

Consequently, when one organization, or coalition of organizations, made a decision, it did not necessarily apply to all Palestinian groups. In the aftermath of the PNC's decision to go to the 1991 peace conference, organizations, both inside and outside the PLO, dissociated themselves from the conference, vowing to combat it.²⁴⁰ This trend, which persists to the present, minimizes the likelihood that dissenting Palestinian organizations will abide by any peace agreements which the continuing negotiations may produce.

The Palestinian national movement's components were divided into three categories: Organizations which accepted the PLO's authority, organizations which did not, and individual Palestinians whose views may have reflected the position of a certain organization, but who chose not to belong to that group.

²³⁹ (...continued)

warns against Hasty Peace with Israel," Reuters, September 4, 1993; P. Smerdon, "PLO-Israeli Pact corners Radicals, Fundamentalists," Reuters, September 10, 1993.

²⁴⁰ On October 21, 1991, the PFLP, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and Hamas issued a joint communique which stated, in part that "we proclaim our categoric [sic] rejection of the American liquidation project and we rise up to combat it."

Reuters, October 21, 1991.

On the same day, PFLP-General Command leader Ahmad Jibril stated, at a Teheran conference, that "these people, who have been chosen by Israel and the United States, are agents. The United States will not be able to protect them."

"Many Opposed to Peace Conference, Some Threaten Attacks," Agence France Presse, October 21, 1991.

In 1991, the representatives of seven armed organizations sat on the PLO's Executive Committee²⁴¹: Fatah, the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF)²⁴², both factions of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), the Iraqi-supported Arab Liberation Front (ALF), the Popular Struggle Front (PSF), and the Palestinian Communist Party. Of these, only Fatah, the DFLP's splinter faction headed by Yasir 'Abid Rabbuh, and the Palestinian Communist Party supported the Arab-Israeli peace process. The rest did not. Both the PFLP and Nayif Hawatimah's DFLP faction declared their opposition to the U.S.-sponsored negotiations, going so far as to issue a joint condemnatory statement with the Islamic fundamentalist group, Hamas. The PSF, ALF, and PLF each issued statements condemning the negotiations as well.²⁴³

²⁴¹ The eighteen member body includes non-militant organizations as well as independent members.

"PLO Executive Committee Confirmed," AP, September 28, 1991.

The PLO's approval of autonomy discussions between it and the Israeli government led to the withdrawal of the PFLP and DFLP - the two constituent organizations opposed to the peace process - from its Executive Committee on September 10, 1993.

"PFLP, DFLP Resign from PLO Executive; Say Accord with Israel not Binding," Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic, 0948 gmt, September 1993, in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, September 11, 1993, p. ME/1791/MED. See also "Hourani Quits PLO Executive, Fifth to Leave," Reuters, September 11, 1993; Y. Ibrahim, "Mideast Accord: The PLO; Arafat Weighs US Trip to Sign Pact with Israel," New York Times, September 11, 1993, p. A5.

²⁴² Headed by Muhammad Abu Al-'Abbas.

²⁴³ "Palestinian Affairs in Brief: PSF Rejects Talks and Pledges to Continue Struggle," Iraqi News Agency in Arabic, 1030 (continued...)

The organizations which did not accept the PLO's authority could be divided into secular and Islamic fundamentalist

²⁴³ (...continued)

gmt, October 16, 1991 in British Broadcasting Corporation: Summary of World Broadcasts, October 18, 1991, p. ME/1206/A/1; "Palestinian Affairs in Brief: PSF Criticises its Secretary-General on PNC Resolutions Al-Ouds Radio Report," Al-Ouds Palestinian Arab Radio, 1730 gmt, October 14, 1991 in British Broadcasting Corporation: Summary of World Broadcasts, October 18, 1991, p. ME/1206/A/1. See also "Palestinian Broadcast From Iraq Says Arab Liberation Front Rejects Conference," Voice of Palestine (Baghdad), 1646 gmt, October 20, 1991 in British Broadcasting Corporation: Summary of World Broadcasts, October 22, 1991, p. ME/1209/A/1; "Abu Abbas Says He Plans to Leave PLO Executive," Reuters, September 26, 1991.

On September 21 of the following year, the PFLP and DFLP politburos, concerned that the negotiating process in Washington "... is moving rapidly in the direction set for it by the USA," discussed ways "... to consolidate their bilateral ties and upgrade their militant cooperation and joint action to ensure the widest possible mobilisation of the Palestinian masses facing the risks involved in the liquidatory solutions that are being floated." The meeting resulted in the creation of "a unified command structure to steer joint action between them in various political, popular and militant spheres within the framework of the struggle to frustrate the administrative self-rule plan" "DFLP, PFLP Statement Calls for Observance of General Strike Call," Al-Ouds Palestinian Arab Radio, 1730 gmt, September 22, 1992 in British Broadcasting Corporation: Summary of World Broadcasts, September 24, 1992, p. ME/149/A/1; See also "Al-I'lan 'an Tashkil Hai'ah Qiyadiyyah Muwahhadah li al-Jabhatain al-Sha'biyyah wa al-Dimuqratiyyah [The Announcement of the Formation of the United Leadership Body of the Popular and Democratic Fronts]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1118, September 27, 1992, p. 6; "Radical PLO Factions Oppose Israeli Offer for Self-Rule," Xinhua General Overseas News Service, September 22, 1992, Item No. 0922279; "Radical Palestinians Protest Arab-Israeli Peace Talks," Xinhua General Overseas News Service, September 23, 1992, Item No. 0923185; "PFLP and DFLP Reportedly Form 'Unified Command' to Confront 'Self-Rule,'" Radio Monte Carlo, 2000 gmt, September 21, 1992 in British Broadcasting Corporation: Summary of World Broadcasts, September 23, 1992, p. ME/1493/A/1; "Radical Palestinians Call for One-Day Strike," Reuters, September 22, 1992; "PLO Groups Unite," Jerusalem Post, September 22, 1992; "Two Radical PLO Factions Challenge Arafat Leadership," AP, September 22, 1992; I. Hamza, "Two Radical PLO Groups Announce Joint Leadership," Reuters, September 21, 1992.

organizations. The Palestinian fundamentalist organizations - Hamas and the Islamic Jihad - sought to replace Israel with an Islamic state.²⁴⁴ The secular organizations sought to replace

²⁴⁴ Palestinian Islamic fundamentalism's ideological roots can be traced to the time of medieval philosopher Taqi al-Din Ibn Taimiyyah, who maintained that all Muslim rulers whose laws were based on God's commands and ensured the community's spiritual welfare should be obeyed. This implied, conversely, that rulers whose actions violated Islamic precepts should be overthrown. This principle was first applied in the early eighteenth century by Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab who, inspired by Ibn Taimiyyah's teachings, joined forces with the Sa'ud family to stamp out the pre-Islamic practices which had crept back into the Arabian Peninsula since Islam's emergence and to restore the religious and ethical practices which prevailed during the time of the prophet Muhammad and his successors.

The tradition of rebellion against an 'unjust' Islamic ruler continued in the 1870's and 1880's under the guidance of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, who, instead of opposing local pre-Islamic practices, fought against what he considered the undue influence of Western ideas and governments in the Middle East and North Africa by calling for the overthrow of their Ottoman allies.

In 1928, the founding in Egypt of the Muslim Brotherhood [al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin] by Hassan al-Banna translated these notions into formal organization and concrete action. Having established branches throughout the region, the Brotherhood's adherents sought the establishment of an Islamic state similar to the one which existed during the time of the prophet Muhammad and his successors, that is, one whose policies were based on the shari'ah, or Islamic legal code. See R. Shaged and A. Shabi, Hamas: Mi Emunah Be'allah Laderekh Ha Teror [Hamas: From Faith in Allah to the Path of Terrorism] (Jerusalem, Israel: Keter Hotsa'ah La'or, 1994) (hereinafter "Shaged"), p. 37. This did not mean a literal revival of the customs of those days, but rather the building of a "... society operating according to Islamic norms and values." Id., p. 38. A ruler (Muslim or non-Muslim) whose actions were based on any other standard was considered an infidel (kafir) and therefore had to be removed.

Foreign governors (in the case of mid-twentieth century Egypt, the British) and Arab rulers closely allied with the West had introduced ideas and practices into the region which the Brotherhood's adherents believed weakened the moral fiber of Arab society and diluted the Islamic moral base which had given it strength in ages past. They maintained that western ideas had

(continued...)

Israel with a 'secular democratic' state. They included the PFLP-GC, Fatah - the Revolutionary Council, Fatah - the Uprising, Al-Sa'iqah, and the PLF's Tal'at Ya'qub Faction.

The members of the third category, those unaffiliated with a particular organization, included those whom Israel would have deemed acceptable negotiating partners at the time, ie., non-PLO members.²⁴⁵ While they never had any real authority individually, both they and the PLO were able to claim that the

²⁴⁴ (...continued)

fostered the growth of, among other phenomena, licentiousness, materialism, socialism, and nationalism - the last two of which are humanist concepts which place man at the head of one's priorities rather than God.

In the 1950's, the concept of resisting a kafir² ruler was further institutionalized by Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Sayyid al-Qutub, who maintained that an Arab leader whose actions were not guided by the shari'ah was a legitimate target for ji'had, or holy war. This was in stark contrast to the position adopted by traditional Sunni Islam, which - in light of the "... trauma of the fitna (the civil war which broke out following Muhammad's death) ..." - expressly forbade any rebellion against the authorities. Egyptian president Anwar al-Sadat's assassination in 1981 by the Jihad al-Islami organization was guided by the notion that violent opposition to a ruler whose actions contravened Islamic interests was legitimate. Id., p. 39.

Hamas, whose ideological roots are in the Muslim Brotherhood, applied the concept of violent resistance to an infidel government - and its replacement by a shari'ah-based state - to the Palestinian struggle against Israel. Unlike Fatah, Hamas has no doctrinal provision for coexistence with the non-Muslim Israelis and, unlike the PFLP, rejects the notion of a 'secular, democratic state'.

²⁴⁵ These should be distinguished from individuals who sit on the Palestine National Council and PLO Executive Committee - who are official PLO members.

PLO had given them the authority to negotiate with Israel on the Palestinians' behalf.²⁴⁶

The Palestinian organizations which supported negotiations with Israel perceived a fundamental change in the United States government's attitude towards that country and believed that American pressure on Israel would secure for them their minimal aims.²⁴⁷ Palestinian organizations opposed to the negotiations, both in and out of the PLO, acknowledged no such change.

Both the PFLP and rejectionist organizations outside the PLO rejected the peace conference as a capitulation to U.S. and Israeli interests.²⁴⁸ The PFLP, however, although it froze its

²⁴⁶ M. Al-Sa'id, [Interview With Faruq Qaddumi], Al-Safir (Beirut), October 11, 1991, p. 12; [Al-Husaini, 'Ashrawi Comment After Jordan Talks], Amman Radio (Jordan), 1208 gmt, October 15, 1991 in Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report: Near East and South Asia, FBIS-NES-91-200, October 16, 1991, pp. 1-2, 4.

²⁴⁷ Voice of Palestine (Algiers) in Arabic, 1702 gmt, September 26, 1991 in Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report: Near East and South Asia, FBIS-NES-91-188, September 17, 1991, pp. 3-4; C. Murphy and J. Diehl, "Delegates Will Strive to Gain Early Bargaining Concessions," Washington Post, October 30, 1991, p. A33.

²⁴⁸ Al-Ouds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic, 1750 gmt, October 16, 1991 in, FBIS-NES-91-201, October 17, 1991, pp. 1-2. See also "Mahma 'adhamat al-Masa'ib lan nuta'ti' Ru'asa'ana [No Matter How Great the Misfortunes, We Will Never Bow Our Heads]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1064, August 11, 1991, pp. 4-5; S. Aboudi, "Radical Arabs Step Up Opposition to Mideast Conference," Reuters, October 21, 1991; "Fi Bayan Sadr 'an al-Sha'biyyah wa al-Dimuqratiyyah wa ' Hamas' fi Dawlah Filastin: Sha'buna yaqulu 'la' Qati'ah li al-Mu'tamar al-Tasfawi al-Amriki [In a Statement issued by the PFLP, DFLP, and Hamas: Our People Decisively say 'No' to the Capitulatory American Conference]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1075, October 27, 1991, pp. 12-13; "Fundamentalists, PLO Radicals Rejects Peace Talks," Reuters, October 21, 1991; P. Bakogeorge, "Middle East Conference: Tensions Rise as Israel Accepts Talks," Ottawa (continued...)

membership on the PLO's Executive Committee following the Madrid

²⁴⁸ (...continued)

Citizen, October 21, 1991, p. A1, op. cit..

The PFLP punctuated its opposition to the conference with an attack on an Israeli bus carrying civilian passengers from Shilo, on the West Bank, to Tel Aviv, in which its operatives fired upon the bus with automatic weapons, killing two and wounding six.

R. Yoeli, "Israeli Victims of Bus Attack Buried," AP, October 29, 1991; S. Abi Assi, "Three Israelis Killed in South Lebanon Bomb Attack," AP, October 29, 1991; S. Shargorodsky, "Israel Closes Jerusalem to Residents of Occupied Lands After Attack," AP, October 29, 1991; R. Barr, "Arabs, Israelis Both Conciliatory on Eve of Talks," AP, October 29, 1991; M. Eliason, "Shamir Feels 'Tension and Hope' Arriving for Peace Talks," AP, October 29, 1991; R. Sinai, "Bush, Gorbachev Pledge Not to Sit on Sidelines in Peace Process," AP, October 29, 1991; R. Sinai, "Peace Talks Still on Track Despite Snags, Violence," AP, October 29, 1991; "Mideast Israel Claim," Agence France Presse, October 29, 1991; "Three Israeli Soldiers Reported Killed Ahead of Conference," Agence France Presse, October 29, 1991; "Israeli Helicopters Attack Refugee Camp," Agence France Presse, October 29, 1991; "Violence Surges in Mideast on Eve of Historic Peace Forum," Agence France Presse, October 29, 1991; "Reuter Middle East News Highlights 1900 gmt Oct 29," Reuters, October 29, 1991; "PLO Radical Group Says It Ambushed West Bank Settlers," Reuters, October 29, 1991; A. Ajami, "Lebanese Guerrillas Attack Israel to Thwart Madrid Talks," Reuters, October 29, 1991; P. Bakogeorge, "The Search for Middle East Peace: Violence Sours Mood at Peace Talks," Ottawa Citizen, October 29, 1991, p. A6; M. Kuli, "Wave of Violence Sweeps Lebanon on Eve of Madrid Conference," Reuters, October 29, 1991; A. Meisels, "As Talks Near, Terrorists Strike," Washington Times, October 29, 1991, p. A1; W. Tuohy, "Guerrillas Step Up Attacks on Israelis. Lebanon: Three Soldiers Are Killed in Two Incidents as Arab Radicals Try to Disrupt the Peace Talks in Madrid," Los Angeles Times, October 30, 1991, p. A7; M. Kuli, "Wave of Violence Sweeps Lebanon on Eve of Madrid Conference," Reuters, October 30, 1991; C. Haberman, "The Middle East Talks: At Israel Funeral, Mood is Defiant," New York Times, October 30, 1991, p. A12; Antenne-2 Television Network (Paris), 1900 gmt, October 31, 1991 in Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report, FBIS-NES-91-212, November 1, 1991, p. 38.

peace conference, continued its participation in the PLO despite that organization's endorsement of the peace process.²⁴⁹

Many of the groups mentioned so far claimed to represent the majority of Palestinians. At the time, however, no poll had been taken which accurately reflected the degree of support the

²⁴⁹ On October 31, 1991, Le Figaro published an interview with George Habash who stated that he would propose to his PFLP colleagues that the organization withdraw from the PLO's Executive Committee, which implements the PNC's resolutions, because of its endorsement of Palestinian participation in the Madrid peace conference. His principal objections were that the PLO had agreed to participation without receiving firm prior commitments on the settlements issue, independent Palestinian representation, and the status of East Jerusalem. He added, however, that he would leave it up to the Central Committee to either accept or reject his organization's proposal. He did not indicate whether the PFLP intended to pull out of the PLO entirely. Le Figaro did not specify when the interview had occurred and Habash further obfuscated the matter by stating that a decision would be made before October 30.

"Georges Habache: 'Le Danger Est Le Sionisme'," Le Figaro, October 31, 1991, p. 5.

On November 6, Habash officially announced the freezing of the PFLP's membership on the Executive Committee stating that "we will exercise our role once again within the framework of the Executive Committee, once it goes back on this policy and commits itself to the national constants endorsed by consecutive PNC sessions."

Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio (Clandestine), 1118 gmt, November 6, 1991 in Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report, FBIS-NES-91-216, November 7, 1991, pp. 10-12. See also "Bi Sabab Mu'tamar Madrid: al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah tansahibu min al-Lajnah al-Tanfidhiyyah li Munadhamah al-Tahrir [Because of the Madrid Conference: The Popular Front withdraws From the PLO Executive Committee]," al-Ra'i, November 1, 1991, p. 15.

On September 11, 1993, in response to PLO chairman Yasir 'Arafat's declared intention to recognize Israel, the PFLP again withdrew its representatives from the Executive Committee.

Y. Ibrahim, "Mideast Accord: The PLO; Arafat Weighs US Trip to Sign Pact with Israel," New York Times, September 11, 1993, p. A1.

various Palestinian organizations enjoyed among the general population. Instead, other indicators had to be examined. For example, the number of seats which an organization held in the PNC signified the extent of its influence within that body. It did not present a complete picture, however, since many Palestinian organizations, such as the PFLP-GC, were not PNC members. There was also some question as to whether or not the PNC accurately represented the general cross-section of Palestinians. PFLP Secretary General George Habash even went so far as to say that PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat was the final arbiter of the number of representatives each organization was entitled to send.

Generally, the PNCs have not come into existence as a result of elections, and they are not formed on the basis of specific criteria. Allow me [to be frank]. Regrettably, these councils are formed by Yasir 'Arafat. Consequently, it is accepted that the PFLP be represented by 10 percent or 20 percent. When our head of state forms these councils, he keeps in mind that they should be obedient and should move according to his wish.²⁵⁰

Apart from the PNC, other indicators might be found in the local administrative bodies which Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip might elect as a result of the peace negotiations by examining the political views of the elected members. Regrettably, these freely-elected administrative bodies do not

²⁵⁰ H. Al-Husayni, "Dr. George Habash on Madrid Peace Conference, Just Peace: I Am For Peace, Repatriation Right, Jerusalem, and State; We will Stay Within PLO Framework Through National Council," Al-Sharq al-Awsat, November 1, 1991, p. 5 in Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report, FBIS-NES-91-220, November 14, 1991, pp. 5-7.

yet exist and analysts will have to await the outcome of the negotiations before studying them.

Palestinian nationalist organizations who rejected the current Arab-Israeli negotiations were by no means monolithic. The degree of rejection varied, as did the reasons for doing so. Some organizations, such as the PFLP-GC and Hamas, were quite explicit in their rejection while others, such as the DFLP and the PFLP, cloaked their rejections in qualifiers and theoretical explanations. In order to appreciate the diversity of the Palestinian rejectionist movement at the time, a closer examination of the positions of these four groups is in order.

The PFLP-GC's strident and unequivocal opposition to any sort of peace agreement with Israel contrasted sharply with the PFLP's reasoned consideration of all alternatives and the DFLP's reluctant rejection of the current peace talks. Of the four organizations, its position most closely resembled that of Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement, whose rejection of peace with Israel was just as explicit, but whose target audience was the Palestinian Muslim community. Unlike Hamas, the PFLP-GC directed its message at all Palestinians.

For the PFLP-GC, the only significant issue in the Arab-Israeli conflict was whether or not Israel should exist, rather than where the borders with it should be drawn. It advocated continuing the struggle against Israel as opposed to concluding

agreements with its enemy, however temporary.²⁵¹ The PFLP-GC viewed the Madrid conference as total capitulation to United States and Israeli interests. Its leader, Ahmad Jibril, on October 21, 1991, charged the Palestinian delegates with being agents of those countries. Condemning them to death, Jibril warned that ". . . the United States will not be able to protect them, neither in Madrid nor elsewhere."²⁵²

E. Hamas as the PLO's Primary Competitor

While the PFLP-GC directed its message to Christian, Muslim, as well as secular Palestinians, Hamas sought to establish an Islamic state on the territory now controlled by Israel. In contrast to the PFLP-GC, whose presence in the West Bank and Gaza was negligible, Hamas was the PLO's primary competitor in those

²⁵¹ "PFLP-GC Leader Jibril Praises Iranian Support in Struggle Against Israel," Voice of the Oppressed, 0530 gmt, October 14, 1991 in British Broadcasting Corporation: Summary of World Broadcasts, October 15, 1991, p. ME/1203/A/1.

²⁵² "Palestinian Peace Delegates Condemn Themselves to Death, Jibril Says," Agence France Presse, October 21, 1991. See "Many Opposed to Peace Conference, Some Threaten Attacks," Agence France Presse, October 21, 1991. Following the official announcement of the Israeli-PLO dialogue over the Gaza/Jericho autonomy plan, the PFLP-GC made similar threats on 'Arafat's life, reminding him ". . . that he personally and those who are with him . . ." would be targeted. See "Palestinian Radicals Threaten Arafat with Death," Reuters, August 30, 1993; L. Adoni, "Israeli Deal Stuns Palestinians," Christian Science Monitor, September 1, 1993, p. 2; A. Darwish, "Middle East: 'Hot Embers' Dropped in Yasser Arafat's Lap; Mixed Reaction among Arab Leaders," The Independent, September 1, 1993, p. 6; "Dissident Palestinian Leaders tell Iranian Envoy of PLO 'Treachery'," Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Persian, 0330 gmt, September 3, 1993 in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, September 4, 1993, p. ME/1785/MED.

areas.²⁵³ Although the PLO attempted to bring Hamas into its organization, Hamas resisted and, apart from its joint statement with the PFLP and DFLP mentioned earlier, showed only disdain for the secular-nationalist organizations which comprised it. According to one Palestinian journalist, Hamas operatives in

²⁵³ In recent elections to Palestinian quasi-governmental bodies in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Hamas achieved respectable results against the so-called nationalist bloc (which Al-Fatah, the PFLP, and the DFLP comprise), and in the March 1992 elections to the Ramallah Chamber of Commerce, defeated the nationalist bloc in a clean sweep of all eleven seats. The nationalist bloc succeeded in placing a single member in the chamber when the Israeli military government disqualified the fundamentalist candidate for security violations. Fundamentalist candidates received ten percent of the vote in the Gaza Bar Association elections in March and forty-two percent of the vote in the Gaza Medical Association elections in February, although they did not do nearly as well in the November 1991 Gaza Chamber of Commerce elections. While these results reflect only the degree of support the various Palestinian groups in the territories receive within a specific sector of society, they are, unfortunately, the best indicators available.

See "The PLO Exposed," Jerusalem Post, March 6, 1992, no page number; "Hamas Victory," Independent, March 5, 1992, p. 10; J. Immanuel, "Ramallah an 'Islamic Republic' After Fundamentalist Victory," Jerusalem Post, March 5, 1992, no page number; J. Immanuel, "Pro-PLO List Suffers Heavy Setback in Ramallah Election," Jerusalem Post, March 4, 1992, no page number; "Islamic Candidates Stun PLO in West Bank Vote," Reuters, March 4, 1992; "Fourth Poll Victory for Pro-PLO Candidates in the Strip," Middle East News Network, March 2, 1992; "Moslem Fundamentalists Lose Election in Gaza," Reuters, February 1, 1992; "Moslem Fundamentalists Lose Election in Gaza Strip," Reuters, January 24, 1992.

More recently, Hamas candidates for seats in the Accountants Association in the Gaza Strip defeated a combined list of Fatah and PFLP candidates to take control of that organization, reflecting a change from previous years when pro-PLO contenders were able to maintain at least a narrow majority.

"Militant Islamic Hamas Defeats PLO in Gaza Vote," Reuters, June 24, 1993. See also R. Marcus, "Gunmen Open Fire at Soldiers in Gaza, One Lightly Wounded," Jerusalem Post, July 23, 1993, no page given.

Nablus ". . . captured a [PLO] activist wanted by the Israeli army for more than three years, stabbed him 17 times, then left him bleeding in the street. The man was transferred to the local hospital and later arrested by Israeli soldiers."²⁵⁴ Hamas's differences with the PLO were highlighted in 1991 when the PLO's support for the Madrid conference resulted in violent clashes between Hamas and Fatah activists on the Gaza Strip, in which forty people were wounded.²⁵⁵

Unlike its secular counterparts, Hamas saw the Arab-Israeli dispute as an eternal conflict between Muslims and Jews, which began with the prophet Muhammad and which it believed would continue for as long as necessary. It considered the uprising part of ". . . an Arab-Islamic-Palestinian renaissance . . ." and

²⁵⁴ E. Fraitekh, "Intifada: Now the War Among the Palestinians. The Secular-Fundamentalist Schism on the West Bank," Washington Post, November 24, 1991, p. C2.

²⁵⁵ G. Frankel, "Talks Please Palestinians - So Far; Expectations Remain Low that Israel Will Grant Concessions," Washington Post, November 4, 1991, p. A17.

More recently (March 13, 1992), clashes broke out between Fatah and Hamas supporters in Ramallah in which around "fifty youths on each side engaged in fistfights."

J. Immanuel, "Ramallah Restaurant Torched in Apparent Hamas-PLO Dispute," Jerusalem Post, March 16, 1992, no page number. See also D. Regev, "Mefaged Hulyat 'Hanesher Ha'adom' Vesgano nilkedu biretsu'at 'Azah [The 'Red Eagle' Cell Commander and his Deputy are Captured in the Gaza Strip]," Yedi'ot Aharonot, July 14, 1992, p. 14.

an important stage in its protracted, multi-generational war against Israel.²⁵⁶

The DFLP's Hawatimah faction, although it joined the PFLP and Hamas in condemning the current negotiations, did not oppose a peace treaty with Israel in principle, but appeared to object only to the fact that the United States and Israel did not recognize the PLO as the Palestinians' official representative.²⁵⁷ Like its counterparts, it favored continued armed violence against Israel, but now advocated targeting Israeli soldiers only.²⁵⁸

In common with the PFLP-GC and Hamas (but in contrast to the DFLP), the PFLP also stubbornly refused to accept Israel's continued existence. In principle, however, the PFLP did not oppose a negotiated solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, as long as that solution resulted in Israel's disappearance. It realistically concluded that force alone would not defeat Israel

²⁵⁶ [Interview with official Hamas Spokesman Ibrahim Ghawshah by Radio Monte Carlo's Salah Salamah and Widad 'Alam Al-Din], Radio Monte Carlo (Paris), 1950 gmt, October 31, 1991 in Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report, FBIS-NES-91-212, November 1, 1991, pp. 37-38.

²⁵⁷ "DFLP Threatens Boycott of Palestinian Parliament," Reuters, September 20, 1991. Although both Israel and the United States recognize the PLO as the Palestinians' representative, the DFLP nevertheless opposes the agreements and arrangements which resulted from the Israeli-PLO negotiations in 1993 and 1994 based on its belief that Israel retains effective control over the autonomous Palestinian areas. See, e.g. Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic, 1630 gmt, September 17, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-182, September 20, 1994, p. 7.

²⁵⁸ MBC Television (London), 1800 gmt, November 9, 1991 in Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report, FBIS-NES-91-218, November 12, 1991, p. 9.

and that territory recovered through diplomacy could be used as a staging area for further attacks on the Jewish state.

F. The PFLP's Conditions for Peace

In November 1988, when the PLO implicitly recognized Israel by accepting United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338, George Habash held a press conference in Algiers at which he outlined the PFLP's position on international peace conferences and recognition of Israel.

Habash was quick to point out that the PNC's recognition of Resolutions 242 and 338 did not imply that it had recognized Israel.²⁵⁹ He distinguished the uprising's present goals from the goals which the Palestinians would pursue at an 'authoritative' international peace conference:

The goal of the uprising now is to remove the occupation from the areas which it occupied in 1967. We cannot shoulder it with the responsibility of liberating all Palestinian objectives, namely Palestine from the river to the sea. This is more than what is required.

²⁵⁹ Habash stated that in his opinion, "... there is a great difference between recognizing Israel and adopting Resolutions 242 and 338, assuming that we add to them of the right to self-determination and for this reason, I do not believe that the national conference recognized Israel."

"Habash fi Mu'tamar Sahafi 'aqadahu bi Qasr al-Mu'tamarat fi Nadi al-Sanawbar bi Al-Jaza'ir: Al-Intifadhah faradhat Istimrar Wahdatina raghim al-Khilaf 'ala Qadhiyyah Mufassiliyyah [Habash at a Press Conference Which He Convened in the Conference Palace at the Al-Sanawbar Club in Algiers: The Uprising Has Compelled [Us] to Perpetuate Our Unity Despite Differences on a Controversial Issue]," Al-Hadaf, No. 936, November 20, 1988, pp. 7-10.

At the international conference, the Palestinian issue will be discussed in all its aspects and not only from the standpoint of 1967.²⁶⁰

Later during the press conference, Habash was asked whether the PFLP would honor a peace agreement with Israel in which the Palestinians established a state on the West Bank and Gaza, with East Jerusalem as its capital. His answer was conciliatory but non-committal:

I will answer you and I do so with a deep feeling of responsibility. I am now more than sixty years of age, I have children, and I know the meaning of life I know that in Palestine, there are more than three million Jews and around one million Palestinians, in addition to three million outside Palestine.

I say, come let us sit down at the international conference to discuss the matter of our children and your children from every angle. I believe that I have the right to present my view of the solution which will serve the coming generations . . . our children as Palestinians and Jews. I am absolutely convinced that

²⁶⁰ Id. Habash reiterated this shortly thereafter in a December 1988 speech commemorating the PFLP's twenty-first anniversary:

We all know that the uprising is now taking place on the Palestinian Bank and the Gaza Strip - that is to say, the areas occupied since 1967 - and we cannot burden our Palestinian masses there, and particularly at this stage, with the responsibility of liberating all Palestinian national soil. This is the responsibility of all of the Palestinian masses . . . the masses of the Galilee, the Triangle, and the Negev . . . the masses of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the Palestinian masses in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and the Diaspora Not only this, but it is also the responsibility of all Arab masses.

"Al-Rafiq Jurj Habash: Sanabqa na'milu li Istimrar al-Intifadhah li Tas'id al-Intifadhah . . . li Tajdhir al-Intifadhah . . . li Imtidad al-Intifadhah [Comrade George Habash: We Will Continue to Work to Perpetuate the Uprising, to Escalate the Uprising . . . to Cause the Uprising to Take Root . . . to Prolong the Uprising]," Al-Hadaf, No. 941, January 1, 1989, p. 6.

we must seriously consider setting up a democratic state in which everyone will coexist in peace. Moreover, we, at the international conference, will listen to what you have to say in all its aspects. What we aspire to now, at this moment, is a Palestinian state. Afterwards, we shall discuss our right to return. . . .²⁶¹

After Habash reminded the United Nations of its responsibility to convene such a conference, a reporter pressed him to answer the question directly. Habash responded testily:

After Israel answers these questions, you will have the right to put them to me. I cannot understand the logic of this question . . . I am a displaced person and a refugee and you want me to recognize Israel!!²⁶²

This interview illustrates two important points. First, the PFLP had no objection to an international Middle East peace conference per se, provided that it presented a comprehensive solution; in this case, one in which Israel no longer existed. This is what he most likely implied in his proposal for a bi-national state. Second, the PFLP was a relatively pragmatic organization. When he limited the uprising's goals to recovering the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, Habash probably realized that the Palestinians were, for the moment, too weak to recover all of their claims ("We cannot shoulder [the uprising] with the responsibility of liberating all Palestinian objectives, namely from the river to the sea.").

The notion of 'liberating Palestine in stages' was not new to the PFLP. It was enshrined in the organization's ideology in

²⁶¹ Id.

²⁶² Al-Hadaf, November 20, 1988, op. cit. .

1981 when the PFLP held its Fourth National Congress. The congress' political report states that the idea of gradual liberation was first proposed at the twelfth PNC, held in Cairo in June 1974,²⁶³ although, as this study demonstrated earlier, this is incorrect.

Article 4 of the PLO's 1974 Political Program states that ". . . the PLO regards every act of liberation of Palestinian territory as a step on the path to the realization of its strategy, the establishment of a democratic Palestinian State as laid down in previous congress resolutions of the Palestinian National Congress."²⁶⁴ The PFLP supported the idea in principle because it believed that it would help to win international support for the Palestinian cause.²⁶⁵ However, it objected to the PNC's political program because " . . . it was evident that Arab reaction and a section of the Palestinian bourgeoisie were ready to settle the conflict on this basis. It was also clear that the 'peace' referred to was a serious one with a good chance of being implemented."²⁶⁶

Later that summer, the PFLP and similarly inclined Palestinian organizations formed the Rejection Front, which shunned United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338, but accepted the

²⁶³ PFLP, Political Report of the PFLP's 4th Congress (Damascus: Central Information Committee, 1986) (hereinafter "4th Congress"), p. 201.

²⁶⁴ Frangi, p. 141.

²⁶⁵ 4th Congress, p. 202.

²⁶⁶ 4th Congress, p. 201.

notion of establishing a ". . . Palestinian state on any portion of Palestinian land liberated in this phase."²⁶⁷ The Front also ". . . categorically rejected the idea of recognition, reconciliation or negotiations with the Zionist enemy."²⁶⁸

In defining the term 'liberated areas', the political report outlined a scenario of how the Palestinians would gradually recover everything they had lost to Israel:

What are liberated areas? They are areas controlled by the revolution. When the revolution takes control of such an area, it will, of course, establish its authority there. Thus, from a military viewpoint and according to the strategy of popular liberation war, the Palestinian revolution will pass through the phase of establishing the revolution's state in the liberated Palestinian land. From this follows the interim slogan of an independent Palestinian state to be established, without conditions, on any liberated portion of Palestinian land. This slogan specifies a definite interim goal that guides the revolution's struggle; it constitutes a link between the current phase of steadfastness, the phase of creating a supportive operational base and the phase of full liberation and

²⁶⁷ 4th Congress, p. 203. As the Israeli-PLO dialogue over the Gaza/Jericho autonomy proposal began in August 1993, George Habash restated this position. "In principle," he said, "the PFLP cannot object to any Israeli withdrawal from any Palestinian land. This issue, however, should not be viewed in principle only, but also in terms of the agreement that was reached, or the bargain that was reached, between the PLO leadership and Israel." "PFLP's Habash on Gaza-Jericho First; Says Palestinian Uprising to Continue," Radio Monte Carlo - Middle East in Arabic, 1940 gmt, August 29, 1993 in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, August 31, 1993, p. ME/1781/MED. A spokesman for the Hawatimah wing of the DFLP echoed this sentiment when he stated that ". . . [w]e are not against the withdrawal of Israeli forces but we want that withdrawal to be a part of a continuous withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian territories." B. Hajj, "Palestinian hardliners attack Gaza-Jericho Plan," Reuters, August 30, 1993.

²⁶⁸ 4th Congress, p. 203.

establishing a popular democratic state in all of Palestine.²⁶⁹

Despite the peace conference's drawbacks for the Palestinian side, it did offer the possibility of a " . . . peaceful transfer of rule . . ." in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip " . . . from Israel to the Palestinians."²⁷⁰ The independent Palestinian state in those territories to which the PLO aspires would allow the PFLP to establish at least a clandestine armed presence in the 'liberated areas', whence it could continue to carry out operations against Israel.

There are indications that the PFLP realized this. Immediately following the naming of the Palestinian delegation to the Madrid conference on October 22, 1991, the PFLP's chief supporter in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Riyadh Al-Maliki promised to apply pressure on the delegation members, but stated

²⁶⁹ Id., p. 207. The PFLP reaffirmed this strategy as late as March 1990:

If we discuss the Palestinian general consciousness - as a consciousness of the entire people - we must grasp the unquestionable common element in this consciousness, which is Palestine's total liberation and the establishment of a state for all Palestinians on the entire land of Palestine.

A. Barqawi, "Al-Dawlah al-Filastiniyyah al-Manshudah wa Mustaqbal al-Nidhal al-Watani al-Filastini [The Sought-After Palestinian State and the Future of the Palestinian National Struggle]," Al-Hadaf, No. 999, March 18, 1990, p. 8.

²⁷⁰ This was stated in the United States government's "letter of intent" to the Palestinian delegation, as summarized in the Israeli daily Yedi'ot Aharonot, October 14, 1991, p. 2 in Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Report: Near East and South Asia, FBIS-NES-91-199, October 15, 1991, pp. 44-45.

that he and his supporters would not physically prevent them from going.²⁷¹

While this approach did not support the notion that the PFLP might settle for a Palestinian mini-state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, it appeared to verify the PFLP's doctrine, first articulated in 1981, that the 'interim solution' which the Palestinian entity alongside Israel would serve the organization's ultimate aim of Israel's total elimination.

We are, of course, aware that this interim slogan does not present a final, magical solution to the existing discrepancy between the strategic goal of the revolution and the international legitimacy gained by the Zionist entity. We realize also that some international forces will support us in achieving this interim goal, but not based on our own frame of reference. We also realize that while achieving any interim goal, the revolution will come under considerable pressure to recognize the Zionist enemy and coexist with it. Yet the slogan will receive the support of the forces of socialism and liberation, and broad sections of international public opinion, for a long time to come.²⁷²

The 1991 Madrid Conference transformed the peace process from one in which the parties negotiated through intermediaries to one in which all of the parties (excluding the PLO) faced each other directly. The negotiators' ability to make the concessions required for an agreement, however, was severely hobbled both by excessive devotion to historical claims and the fear of angering domestic political opponents.

²⁷¹ R. Beeston and G. Brock, "Palestinian Team Meets Approval of Israeli Delegation," The Times, October 23, 1991, no page number given.

²⁷² 4th Congress, p. 207.

The Israeli negotiating team represented a government, headed by the Likud Party, whose leadership was absolutely opposed to making the concessions demanded by its Arab counterparts. While it favored, in principle, the conclusion of peace treaties with its neighbors and the establishment of a permanent arrangement with the Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Likud government was loathe to take measures which would compromise Israeli security in any way or cede territory which it regarded as part of Israel. It also absolutely forbade any direct negotiations with the PLO, meeting instead with Palestinians from the territories with no apparent connections with the organization. Following his defeat in the June 1992 elections, former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir admitted that his strategy was simply to drag out the negotiations with the Palestinians in order to buy enough time to continue to establish settlements and to render the Jewish presence in the territories an irrevocable fact.²⁷³

²⁷³ M. Graeme Bannerman, "Arabs and Israelis: Slow Walk Toward Peace," Foreign Affairs, 1992-1993: America and the World.

Chapter 7: Towards an Israel-PLO Accord

Yitzhaq Rabin's election, however, brought significant changes to Israel's negotiating position regarding the territories' ultimate fate. The Labor government, in contrast with Likud, viewed the settlements in a security-related, rather than political, context; their purpose being to hold strategically vital locations, as opposed to changing the area's demographic composition. It also lifted the ban imposed by the Likud government on meetings between Israeli citizens and PLO members, although the Israeli leadership continued to refuse to meet with PLO officials.

With Bill Clinton's assumption of the presidency in the United States, Israel faced the prospect of dealing with an administration which focused efforts on domestic, rather than foreign issues and therefore reluctant²⁷⁴ to risk scarce financial resources on aid to countries whose policies appeared to be incompatible with United States interests. Recalling the tension which developed between the United States and Israel over the Likud's insistence on continuing the building of 'political settlements' in the territories, the Rabin government sought to avoid further crises with Israel's principal financial backer and severely scale back the settlement program in a manner consistent with its security requirements.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴ Id. See also "Israeli News Conference with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D.C., Monday, September 13, 1993," Federal News Service, September [14 ?], 1993.

The PLO, on the other hand, had no sources of monetary support and by the middle of 1993, was on the verge of bankruptcy.²⁷⁵ The financial aid that it had traditionally received from Saudi Arabia and other conservative Persian Gulf states in the 1980's had been cut off as a result of the organization's support for Iraq during the 1990-1991 war. By August, the PLO was seeking loans from western governments and selling off some of its real estate holdings in order to raise cash to finance administrative functions and pay salaries.²⁷⁶

Apart from its financial difficulties, the PLO was also losing the confidence of West Bank and Gaza Palestinians in its ability to achieve meaningful results in its indirect negotiations with Israel and as a result, viewed its declining popularity compared to Hamas and other radical Palestinian organizations with alarm.²⁷⁷ Recognition by Israel and the

²⁷⁵ C. Haberman, "How Israel Made its Deal with the PLO," Irish Times, September 11, 1993, p. 9.

²⁷⁶ Agence France Presse, 0914 gmt, August 26, 1993; Al-Dustur, August 26, 1993, pp. 1 and 24 in FBIS-NES-93-164, August 26, 1993, pp. 1-2. See also "Palestine Liberation Organization Rift Surfaces as Israel Accepts PLO Presence in Talks; Dissatisfaction with Arafat Grows," Facts on File World News Digest, August 26, 1993, p. 621 A1.

²⁷⁷ Beirut, Voice of Lebanon in Arabic, 0542 gmt, August 21, 1993 in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, August 24, 1993, p. ME/1775/A. See also S. Helm, "Arafat Seeks Student Support," Independent, November 13, 1992, p. 16; J. Immanuel, "PLO List Wins in Bir Zeit Election," Jerusalem Post, November 13, 1992; J. Wallach, "Israel's Rabin Should Meet PLO's Arafat," Newsday, November 12, 1992, p. 103; "PLO Unites to Block Fundamentalists at University," Reuters, November 12, 1992; R. Marcus, "Gunmen Open Fire at Soldiers in Gaza, One Slightly Wounded," Jerusalem Post, July 25, 1993. Ironically, Rabin shared 'Arafat's fear of

(continued...)

United States of the PLO as the Palestinians' official representative would be perceived by its constituents as a substantial diplomatic gain.

A. Initial Contacts

From January through September 1993, the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations proceeded on overt and covert tracks. The overt negotiations appeared to demonstrate no changes in the manner in which they had been conducted since the 1991 Madrid conference. The Israeli government, despite having lifted the ban on meetings between Israeli citizens and PLO members, continued to refuse direct negotiations with the organization. The PLO's failure to remove the clauses from its covenant calling for Israel's destruction and its refusal to renounce the use of violence prevented the Rabin government from openly recognizing it.

The government's uncertainty²⁷⁷ over the future Palestinian authority's ability to deter opponents of the peace process from carrying out violent actions against Israeli citizens rendered it less willing to accord the Palestinians too much authority. While the PLO actively sought direct negotiations with

²⁷⁷ (...continued)

Hamas and was, consequently, persuaded to deal with the PLO as the preferable alternative. See M. Colvin, "Can These Hands Clasp in Peace?" Sunday Times, September 5, 1993; "Israeli News Conference with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D.C., Monday September 13, 1993," Federal News Service, September [14 ?], 1993; P. Jacobson, "'The PLO Flag was Trampled in the Dust as a Symbol of Surrender,'" Sunday Times, September 5, 1993.

Israel,²⁷⁸ it was nevertheless reluctant to remove its covenant's provisions calling for Israel's destruction - principles which the member organizations opposed to the peace talks considered fundamental principles.

Paralyzed by their traditional mind-sets, neither side was capable of openly making the concessions necessary in order to arrive at an agreement. The negotiators required a framework in which they could engage in a free exchange of ideas without the danger of public embarrassment. Beginning in January 1993, a series of thirteen secret negotiating sessions were held in Norway under the mediation of Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Jorgen Holst.²⁷⁹

Having participated in all United Nations peacekeeping operations since they began in the 1950's, and having sponsored numerous foreign aid projects in the region, the Norwegian government had acquired an intimate familiarity with the conflict's issues and had developed close relations with all of its parties. These qualifications, as well Norway's unfamiliar

²⁷⁸ Jerusalem, Qol Yisra'el, 1700 gmt, February 13, 1993 in FBIS-NES-93-029, February 16, 1993, p. 5. See also D. Nascetti, Interview with PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, L'Espresso, February 7, 1993, pp. 80-83 in FBIS-NES-93-025, February 9, 1993, pp. 4-5; Der Spiegel, February 8, 1993, pp. 142-143 in FBIS-NES-93-025, February 9, 1993, pp. 5-6.

²⁷⁹ An insider's account of these sessions can be found in the transcript of a press conference given by Foreign Minister Holst on October 4, 1993. See "National Press Club Morning Newsmaker Johan Jorgen Holst, Norwegian Foreign Minister, National Press Club, Washington, D.C.," Federal News Service, October 4, 1993.

and unexpected role as a venue for such talks, ensured their success and the preservation of their secrecy.

B. September 13, 1993: Declaration of Principles (DOP) Signed

The negotiations began as exploratory discussions between Israeli academics with government connections and PLO officials. By April, the Israeli government had authorized official negotiations, eventually involving Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres. By the end of August, the negotiators had secretly initialed a declaration of principles and on September 10, Holst was able to obtain Rabin's recognition of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians, as well as the PLO's renunciation of terrorism and commitment to revoke the articles of its covenant which denied Israel its right to exist.²⁸⁰ On September 13, 1993, Rabin and 'Arafat signed a Declaration of Principles (DOP), which established the framework for negotiations between Israel and the PLO.

Even before its formal signing, the issues embodied in the DOP were already being formally discussed. In early June,

²⁸⁰ Letter from Y. Rabin to Y. 'Arafat (September 10, 1993) (recognizing the PLO as representative of the Palestinian people); Letter from Y. 'Arafat to J. Holst (September 9, 1993) (renouncing terrorism). See also "Israeli News Conference with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D.C., Monday, September 13, 1993," Federal News Service, September [14 ?], 1993; C. Haberman, "How Israel Made its Deal with the PLO," Irish Times, September 11, 1993, p. 9; "Ba'da 29 'Aman min al-Muwajahat Munadhdhamah al-Tahrir wa Isra'il tatabadil al-I'tiraf. Tal Abib tutalibu 'Arafat bi Waqf al-Intifadhah. Ittifaq al-Hukm al-Dhati yuwaqqa'u al-Ithnain al-Qadim [After 29 Years of Conflict, the PLO and Israel Recognize Each Other. Tel Aviv Demands that 'Arafat Halt the Uprising. The Autonomy Agreement Will Be Signed Next Monday]," 'Uman, September 10, 1993, p. 1.

Shim'on Peres proposed the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza Strip and the transfer of authority to the Palestinians. This, however, was insufficient for the PLO, since it implied a willingness to forego its claims to the West Bank. In response to Peres' suggestion, 'Arafat countered, on June 11, with the idea of PLO authority over the Gaza Strip and a part of the West Bank - Jericho, for example - in an interview with the Israeli daily Ha'aretz:

Give me the Gaza Strip. I can restore order there as I did in Lebanon where the situation was far more complicated. The situation is simpler in Gaza and will improve because we will receive financial aid. This would be a good start for the whole peace process . . . I also need somewhere in the occupied West Bank. It could be Jericho or elsewhere. I cannot let it be said that I sold out the West Bank for Gaza. Obviously a corridor would have to be set up between the two areas under international control.²⁸¹

By July 29 - following reports of secret meetings with PLO leader Mahmud 'Abbas in Alexandria, Egypt²⁸² - Peres indicated Israel's willingness to offer the Palestinians control over ". . . Gaza plus something",²⁸³ and by mid-August, stated that a Palestinian authority in Jericho, as well, would be acceptable to Israel.²⁸⁴

²⁸¹ Quoted in "Palestine - Part 3A - the PLO Leadership Structure," APS Diplomatic Fate of the Arabian Peninsula (Arabic Press Service Organisation), No. 6, Vol. 25, June 28, 1993.

²⁸² "Peres Said to Hold Secret Talks with a PLO Leader," Agence France Presse, July 16, 1993.

²⁸³ "Israel Studying PLO Idea on Peace Talks - Peres," Reuters, July 29, 1993.

²⁸⁴ "Jericho, Gaza Strip Could be Pilot Projects for Autonomy: Peres," Agence France Presse, August 16, 1993.

The Declaration of Principles signed on September 13 stipulated the following: 1) No more than four months after the signing of an agreement, Israel will withdraw its forces from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area (Annex II). The withdrawal would signal the beginning of a five-year transitional period for the transfer of the areas' administrative bodies to Palestinian authority (Article V); 2) Within nine months of the Israeli military withdrawal, Palestinians throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip would hold internationally supervised elections to replace the Israeli military administration and the temporary Palestinian authorities set up in Gaza and Jericho (Article III and Annex I); 3) Following the elections, the Israeli forces would have redeployed outside all Arab population centers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Article XIII); 4) The Palestinian administrators would have authority² over tax collection, the school system, hospital administration, the courts, and the police force (Article VI); 5) Israel would have continued responsibility for external defense and be responsible for public order among the territories' Israeli residents (Annex II); 6) Israel and the PLO would establish a joint liaison committee for resolving disputes over the agreement's implementation (Article XV); 7) Issues, such as water rights, electric power, energy and industrial development, finance, and transportation, would be dealt with through a Committee for Economic Cooperation (Article XI); 8) Within two years of the signing of the agreement on Gaza and Jericho, the PLO would begin discussions on the final status

of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Issues on which the two sides continue to find difficult to resolve, such as Jerusalem's status, Israeli military deployments, and the status of the Jewish settlements, would be resolved by the end of the five-year transition period (Article V); 9) Israel would consider permitting Palestinians who fled the West Bank following the 1967 war to return to their homes there (Article XII); 10) Israel would use its influence to obtain more international aid for the territories (Annex IV).²⁸⁵

C. The Accord's Impact on the Middle East

The negotiations which followed the September 13 signing ceremony changed the Middle Eastern political climate forever. For the cash-poor Palestinians, this was an opportunity to obtain the financial aid required to build a strong economy in the territories, aid which the United States and the European community were all too happy to provide. The PLO also saw the Gaza-Jericho framework as a first step to full Israeli withdrawal from the territories and the establishment there of a " . . . complete Palestinian national authority."²⁸⁶ For the Israelis,

²⁸⁵ See "The Heart of a Deal," U.S. News & World Report, September 13, 1993, pp. 24-25. See also Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-rule Arrangements, September 13, 1993, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

²⁸⁶ "Arafat Interviewed on Agreement, Other Issues 3 Sep," Al-Musawwar, September 10, 1993 in Middle East Intelligence Report, September 10, 1993. See also "News Conference with Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Secretary of State Lloyd Bentsen, and Various Other Conference Participants at the Conclusion of the Conference to Support Middle East Peace, Department of State, Washington, D.C.," Federal News Service,
(continued...)

it was an opportunity to reduce tension in the area and rid itself of the economic burden and drain on morale associated with ruling a hostile population. This would allow it to shift its focus from the headaches accompanying the administration of the territories to economic development. The DOP framework was attractive to Prime Minister Rabin because it postponed resolution of difficult political and security issues while progress was made on matters of common agreement.²⁸⁷ If all went smoothly, it was generally believed, most Israeli-Palestinian differences could be resolved peacefully to the benefit of all parties, and for those which seemed unresolvable, reasonable compromises could be found.

Not all segments among Palestinians and Israelis were interested in compromise, however. The Arab-Israeli conflict had originally stemmed from the diametrically-opposed claims of Arabs and Jews to the same piece of land. Each side had made sacrifices and endured hardships in defending those claims and

²⁸⁶ (...continued)

October 1, 1993; "State Department Background Briefing Topic: Conference to Support Middle East Peace," Federal News Service, September 20, 1993; E. Sciolino, "U.S. to Contribute \$250 Million in Aid for Palestinians," New York Times, September 21, 1993, p. A1; "Middle East: The World Reacts - Peace Agreement," Middle East Economic Digest, September 20, 1993; "Substantial Aid Promised to the Palestinians," Agence France Presse, October 1, 1993; "Donors Pledge Two Billion Dollars for Palestinian Economy," Agence France Presse, October 1, 1993; "EC/Middle East: Parliament Welcomes Council Move But Asks for More Money," European Information Service European Report, September 22, 1993.

²⁸⁷ "Israeli News Conference with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D.C., Monday, September 13, 1993," Federal News Service, September [14 ?], 1993.

the Gaza-Jericho framework's proposed compromises fell short of the expectations of those who still insisted on exclusive possession of the disputed territory.

D. The PFLP Scrambles for a Toehold

The Palestinian organizations opposed to the peace process had begun to form a loose coalition, shortly after the 1991 Madrid conference, known informally as the " . . . ten factions."²⁸⁸ The loss of the Soviet Union - and implicitly Syria - as benefactors compelled secular radical organizations like the PFLP to form alliances with organizations with which it had little in common, apart from an implacable hostility towards Israel. They consequently forged working relationships with Islamic fundamentalist organizations, such as Hamas and Hizbullah,²⁸⁹ not only in a desperate search for allies, but in

²⁸⁸ I. Hamza, "Palestinian Radicals Urge Boycott of Moscow Talks," Reuters, January 26, 1992. See also "Fasa'il Filastiniyyah tarfudhu al-Muqarrarat al-Akhirah li al-Majlis al-Markazi al-Filastini [Palestinian Factions Reject the Latest Palestinian Central Committee Resolutions]," Al-Dustur, October 10, 1992, p. 25. According to Al-Hadaf, these organizations included: the PFLP, Hamas, the DFLP, the PFLP-GC, Fatah (presumably 'Abu Musa'), the Islamic Jihad, Fatah - the Revolutionary Council, al-Sa'iqah, the PSF, and the Palestinian Revolutionary Communist Party. See "'Asharah Fasa'il Filastiniyyah tad'u li Muqata'ah Mu'tamar Madrid [Ten Palestinian Factions call for Boycotting the Madrid Conference]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1076, November 3, 1991, p. 27; "Liqa'at Mukaththafah li 'Asharah Tandhimat Filastiniyyah Munahadhah li al-Hall al-Tasfawi [Intensive Meetings Among Ten Palestinian Organizations Opposed to the Liquidatory Solution]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1117, September 20, 1992, p. 7.

²⁸⁹ "Al-Fasa'il rafadhat Mashru' Ghazzah-Ariha: li al-Insihab Fawran min Hadha al-Mijra [The Factions Reject the Gaza-Jericho Plan: Withdraw Immediately from this Framework]," Al-Nahar, August 31, 1993, p. 5. Prior to the Soviet Union's dissolution - (continued...)

order to counter what they regarded as Fatah's abandonment of the battle against Israel and to back with numerical strength their demand that the Palestinian delegation's withdrawal from the peace talks.²⁹⁰ At its Fifth National Congress, called in order to propose solutions to its predicament, the PFLP affirmed "... the positive nature of dealing with the Islamic forces."²⁹¹

The need for such an alliance grew when, in recognition of the inevitability of direct Israeli-PLO negotiations, the PFLP suspended its membership on the PLO's executive committee.²⁹² Following the September signing of the DOP, the PFLP, by boycotting "... any meetings called by 'Arafat . . .",

²⁸⁹ (...continued)

and the Madrid conference - the PFLP regarded Hamas with suspicion, fearing persecution of its secular constituents by the rulers of the Islamic Palestinian state sought by the latter. The PFLP's suspicion persists to this day, but the organizations continue their arms-length alliance for want of a better alternative. See "The Islamic Fundamentalist Movement in Palestine: Focus on Hamas," Democratic Palestine, No. 51 (July-August-September, 1992), pp. 12-16.

²⁹⁰ "Bi Ism Allah al-Rahman al-Rahim - Bayan Siyasi Ham Sadr 'an al-Fasa'il al-Filastiniyyah al-'Asharah: Li yakun Yawm al-Thamin wa 'Ishrin min Tishrin Awwal Yawman li al-Ghadhab al-Jamahiri dhidda Masirah al-Tasfiyyah wa al-Istislam: Na'm li al-Insiah al-Fawri min al-Mufawadhat [In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate - An Important Political Statement issued by the Ten Palestinian Factions: Let the Twenty-Eighth Day of October be a Day of Popular Anger Against the Path of Settlement and Surrender: Yes to Immediate Withdrawal from the Negotiations]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1123, November 1, 1992, pp. 18-19.

²⁹¹ PFLP, "Al-Taqrir al-Siyasi: al-Juz' al-Thalith [The Political Report: Part Three]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1150, June 13, 1993, pp. 23-38.

²⁹² Al-Dustur, August 26, 1993, p. 28 in FBIS-NES-93-164, August 26, 1993, p. 3.

effectively withdrew from the PLO and vowed to establish an alternative framework to the umbrella organization.²⁹³

E. The PFLP Opposes the DOP and Forms an Opposition Alliance With Palestinian Leftist and Islamic Organizations

The PFLP characterized the agreement as ". . . the biggest blow to the Palestinian national struggle in its history because it does not provide answers regarding the issues of the settlements, Jerusalem, and 4 million Palestinians in the diaspora, and it means the total collapse of the PLO leadership because of that plan." It reaffirmed the need to strengthen ". . . the broad front of democratic Islamic, and national forces . . . " ²⁹⁴ and established an alternative uprising leadership organization to the one in which Fatah participated.²⁹⁵

By the middle of December 1993, the coalition's organizations - under the PFLP's leadership - had formalized their cooperation with the establishment of the Alliance of

²⁹³ R. Mansur, Interview with Nayif Hawatimah, Secretary General of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Sawt al-Sha'b, September 28, 1993, p. 6 in FBIS-NES-93-186, September 28, 1993, p. 5. Opposition to the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations among the PFLP, DFLP, and Hamas remained firm at the grass-roots level, as demonstrated by the victory of their supporters in a coalition against the dominant Fatah faction during the November elections to the Bir Zait University student council. See R. al-Husri, "Intikhabat Majlis Tulbah Jami'ah Bir Zait: al-Nata'ij Qad tansahibu 'ala Qadhaya Siyasiyyah [The Bir Zait University Student Council Elections: The Results are Applicable to Political Issues]," Al-Hayah, November 26, 1993, p. 6.

²⁹⁴ Al-Wasat, September 13-19, 1993, pp. 25-29 in FBIS-NES-93-170, September 17, 1993, pp. 7-8.

²⁹⁵ "PFLP Official Resigns as Deputy Speaker," Jordan Times, October 81, 1993 in Middle East Intelligence Report, October 8, 1993.

Palestinian Forces in Damascus.²⁹⁶ At year's end, the Alliance's secular organizations were calling for the convening of a National Congress in order to draft the new organization's bylaws and establish a command structure.²⁹⁷

In addition to forming coalitions, both the PFLP and Hamas carried out armed attacks in Israel and the territories against Israeli civilians in an effort to undermine public support for the peace process; among the most heinous of which included the killing (and subsequent disfigurement) of two Israeli hikers in Wadi Qelt on the West Bank by PFLP operatives²⁹⁸ and the shooting attack on three Israelis near al-Birah by members of Hamas.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ "Palestinian Groups Opposed to Autonomy Accord Form New Alliance," Agence France Presse, December 16, 1993. The alliance was composed of the PFLP, DFLP, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hizbullah - Palestine, Fatah - the Uprising, the PLF, the ALF, and Fatah - the Revolutionary Council. "Radi[c]al Palestinian Groups Meet to Organize Alliance," AP, December 30, 1993.

²⁹⁷ Al-Sharq al-Awsat, December 31, 1993, p. 3 in FBIS-NES-94-003, January 5, 1994, p. 6. By the end of February, the factions still had not reached an agreement. "Pilgei Ha'opozitsiah Hafalastinit Sheh Hitkansu Bedameseq lo Higi'u Lehaskamah 'al Tokhnit Pe'ulah [The Palestinian Opposition Factions Meeting in Damascus Have Not Arrived at an Agreement on a Program of Action]," Ha'aretz, February 25, 1994, p. A4.

²⁹⁸ "Damascus Group Says It Killed Israeli Hikers," Reuters, October 10, 1993. See also S. Maligorne, "Deux Israéliens Tués par Balles près de Jericho en Cisjordanie [Two Israelis Killed by Bullets Near Jericho on the West Bank]," Agence France Presse, October 9, 1993; "Al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir Filastin: al-Ghadhab al-Sati' . . . Atin [The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine: The . . . Coming . . . Radiant Anger]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1166, October 24, 1993, pp. 11-14.

²⁹⁹ Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew, 0700 gmt and 1100 gmt, December 1, 1993.

Despite their best efforts, the 'Alliance' organizations were unable to undermine the negotiations. By the middle of February 1994, the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators were on the verge of agreement on coordination between the Palestinian police force and the IDF. They engaged in intensive discussions, as well, on the transfer of civilian authority in the territories³⁰⁰ and there were reports, towards the end of February, of Israeli and PLO plans to sign a final agreement on this issue ". . . within a few weeks."³⁰¹

The durability of the peace process underwent its greatest test, however, following the February 25 massacre of 29 Palestinian worshipers at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron. The perpetrator, Barukh Goldstein, was a Jewish resident of nearby Qiryat Arba' affiliated with Kakh. Kakh is a fundamentalist movement dedicated to the expulsion of the Arab inhabitants of Israel and the territories and the replacement of Israel's liberal democratic government by a theocracy based on

³⁰⁰ M. Salim, Agence France Presse, 1118 gmt, February 16, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-033, February 17, 1994, p. 1. See also Cairo MENA in Arabic, 1300 GMT, February 22, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-036, February 23, 1994, p. 1.

³⁰¹ The Cairo daily Al-Akhbar, for example, reported that 'Arafat and Rabin would ". . . meet in Cairo within 15 days . . . to sign the final agreement to transfer civilian authority." Cairo MENA in Arabic, 2110 gmt, February 22, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-036, February 23, 1994, p. 1.

Jewish religious law. Goldstein was bludgeoned to death by the remaining worshippers.³⁰²

Although Goldstein's action met with revulsion among most Israelis, he was considered a hero by many of the Jewish settlers on the West Bank, who had for many years been involved in an undeclared underground war with their Arab neighbors.³⁰³

Radical Palestinian organizations, particularly the Popular and Democratic Fronts, likewise attempted to exploit the incident to their advantage, threatening revenge and calling upon the PLO to halt its negotiations with Israel.³⁰⁴ Ibrahim Yazuri, a Hamas leader in Gaza ". . . called the massacre a 'golden opportunity' for his group to win over the hearts and minds of the Palestinian public."³⁰⁵ Indeed, the wave of Palestinian violence in the

³⁰² D. Hoffman, "Unanswered Questions Surround Massacre at Hebron Mosque," Washington Post, March 8, 1994, p. A12. For an in-depth discussion of the history and ideology of the Kakh movement, see R. Cohen-Almagor, "Vigilant Jewish Fundamentalism: From the JDL to Kach (or 'Shalom Jews, Shalom Dogs')," Terrorism and Political Violence, Vol. 4 (Spring 1992), pp. 44-66.

³⁰³ L. Blumenfeld, "A Time to Kill: Baruch Goldstein Practiced Medicine - and Murder - By the Book," Washington Post, March 20, 1994, pp. F1 and F4.

³⁰⁴ See, e.g. "Rejectionist Groups Threaten Retaliation Against Israel and Arafat," BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, February 28, 1994, p. ME/1933/MED; Y. Torpstein, "Kol Ha'irgunim Hafalastiniyim Beyerihoh, Kolel Fatah, Tov'im Lehafsiq et Ha Moo'm [All Palestinian Organizations in Jericho, Including Fatah, Demand a Halt to the Negotiations]," Ha'aretz, March 3, 1994, p. A3.

³⁰⁵ S. Abu Ramadan, "Gaza Opposition Condemns Arafat's Decision to go to Washington," UPI, February 27, 1994.

territories which followed the massacre seemed to indicate that they might succeed.³⁰⁶

The PLO immediately broke off the talks taking place, at the time in Paris, Washington, and Cairo, while Israel and the United States scrambled to salvage the peace process. President Clinton immediately called for the resumption of the talks in Washington, D.C. and the PLO agreed provided that Israel disarmed the Jewish settlers and permitted international protection for the Palestinians. Israel had rejected these demands in previous discussions.³⁰⁷ The Israeli government immediately condemned the act and Rabin, in a February 28 address to the Knesset, described Goldstein as a murderer who

. . . surfaced from within a small, limited political framework. He grew up in a morass whose sources exist here and overseas. They are foreign to Judaism; they do not belong to us. To him and those like him, we say today: You are not part of the people of Israel; you are not part of the national democratic camp in which all in this House are partners. Many among us despise you. You are not partners to the Zionist effort. You are an alien element; you are wild weeds. Sane Judaism vomits you out from its midst.³⁰⁸

In the same address, Rabin announced the government's decision to carry out administrative detentions against Jewish extremists in the territories, restricting their movements, and

³⁰⁶ D. Hoffman, "Rioting Spreads into Israel: Peace Talks Jeopardized as PLO Recalls Its Negotiators," Washington Post, February 27, 1994, pp. A1 and A24.

³⁰⁷ Washington Post, February 27, 1994, op.cit..

³⁰⁸ "Address by Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin to the Knesset Plenum on the 25 February Massacre in Hebron - Live," Jerusalem, Ool Yisra'el in Hebrew, 1407 gmt, February 28, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-040, March 1, 1994, pp. 31-33.

disarming them. He also directed the attorney general to ". . . investigate the possibility of outlawing Kakh and [its offshoot] Kahana Hay."

This was carried out on March 13, when ". . . Israel banned [Kakh and Kahana Hail], calling them 'terrorist' and saying it will use military and police powers to arrest their members and shut down their operations in the wake of the Hebron massacre." The ban extended to members, supporters, and financial backers, who were subject to prosecution and imprisonment.³⁰⁹

On March 7, Israeli and PLO negotiators in Cairo discussed the resumption of talks³¹⁰ and on March 19, both sides agreed to resume the negotiations following the passage of a U.N. resolution calling upon Israel to permit an international presence in the territories. The resolution did not specify the exact nature of the presence or whether or not it would be capable of protecting the Palestinian residents from armed attack; however, its vagueness allowed for either possibility and enabled both sides to resume the negotiations. Shimon Peres sounded an encouraging note when he stated that Israeli troop

³⁰⁹ D. Hoffman, "Israel Bans Jewish extremists: Crackdown Affects 2 Settler Groups," Washington Post, March 14, 1994, pp. A1 and A15.

³¹⁰ C. Murphy, "Arafat, Israeli Discuss Resumption of Talks," Washington Post, March 8, 1994, p. A12.

withdrawal could begin within six weeks following the resumption of talks.³¹¹

F. Israel-PLO Accord on Palestinian Self-Rule Signed on May 4, 1994

The resumed negotiations bore fruit on May 4 when the PLO and Israel signed an accord granting Palestinians limited self-rule in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area, with negotiations to take place at a later date to determine the permanent status of the territories as a whole.³¹² The PLO, charged with the task of establishing a government and infrastructure, was ill-prepared to carry it out.

The organization was plagued by intense infighting at the highest levels, making coordination of tasks difficult. Former Palestinian negotiators (including Hanan 'Ashrawi and Faisal al-Hussaini), on whom Arafat had counted to participate in the authority's governing council, refused partly because they believed that the self-rule agreement gave Israel undue control over its decisions and partly due to what they regarded as 'Arafat's tendency to monopolize power.³¹³ Yasir 'Abid Rabbu's Palestinian Democratic Union (FIDA) was the only major Palestinian organization to join 'Arafat's coalition. All other

³¹¹ D. Hoffman, "Israel, PLO Prepare for Talks: Peres Says Troops Could be Out of West Bank, Gaza in Six Weeks," Washington Post, March 20, 1994, p. A33.

³¹² "Israel Prepares for Withdrawal," AP, May 4, 1994.

³¹³ S. Nasrawi, "Arafat Fails to Form Autonomy Cabinet," AP, May 8, 1994.

Palestinian groups had so far declined.³¹⁴ This lack of credible leadership was illustrated most graphically in the unavailability of Palestinian officials to manage such essential services as health care, water supplies, and electric power.³¹⁵

'Arafat's inability to recruit nationally recognized leaders was compounded by the threats of radical Palestinian opposition groups to undermine the peace process - threats that had afflicted the Israeli-PLO negotiations from the beginning. The PFLP, which had castigated the DOP, vowed to ". . . continue attacks against the Zionist in all areas which are close to the self-rule areas in Gaza and Jericho, especially the settlements and military gathering points."³¹⁶

³¹⁴ L. Adoni, "Opposition to Israeli Deal Undermines New Authority," Christian Science Monitor, May 9, 1994, p. 3.

³¹⁵ M. Parks, "PLO Unprepared to Assume Authority Called for in Pact; Mideast: Officials have not yet been Selected to Run Essential Services. It will be Weeks Before Palestinian Police Officers are Deployed," Los Angeles Times, May 6, 1994, p. 4. See also D. Hoffman, "Health Care Shortfall - A Dose of Reality for Palestinians," Washington Post, May 8, 1994, p. A23.

³¹⁶ K. Dozier, "PLO Faces New Task: Governing. New Police Force Lacks Funds, Gear," Washington Post, May 6, 1994, p. A30. The PFLP's attitude toward the Palestinian police force has been ambiguous. Because it does not acknowledge the autonomy agreement's legitimacy, the PFLP does not recognize the political legitimacy of the police force either. The PFLP, however, does view the police force as a guarantor of stability in areas abandoned by Israel ["Opposition Groups in Gaza Meet, Say They will not Challenge Palestinian Police," IDF Radio, in Hebrew, 1130 gmt, May 7, 1994 in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, May 10, 1994, ME/1994/MED; S. Peri, "Biqoret Harifah Besuriyah 'Al Haheskem Veh 'Al 'Arafat [Sharp Criticism in Syria of the Agreement and of 'Arafat]," Yedi'ot Aharonot, May 6, 1994, p. 2.], although it stated earlier that should the Palestinian police attempt to arrest its members, they would defend themselves. See "Radicals Say They will Step Up Attacks Against Israel," Reuters, May 5, 1994.

Apart from their threats to violently undermine the Israeli-PLO arrangement, members of the PFLP-led leftist bloc circulated copies of the accord and highlighted its flaws. Chief among these was the existence of joint Palestinian-Israeli committees to oversee its implementation, which opponents believed would give Israel effective control over Palestinian affairs. Thus, they were able to create opposition among Fatah and unaffiliated Palestinian leaders whom 'Arafat might ask to join the embryonic authority. Despite their initial gain, however, these groups have yet to reach a consensus on a viable alternative to autonomy and the new authority's ability to produce immediate tangible benefits for the resident Palestinian population will determine whether or not they are ultimately successful in undermining the agreement.³¹⁷

G. The Palestinian National Authority's Financial Difficulties

The unstable political climate these events generated worried the donor countries (the United States, the European Union member nations, and Japan) who, following the September 1993 signing of the DOP, had pledged an initial installment of \$1.2 billion in financial aid to the future Palestinian authority,³¹⁸. By the time the autonomy agreement was ready to be implemented, little of the money pledged had actually been

³¹⁷ Christian Science Monitor, May 9, 1994, op. cit.

³¹⁸ T. Lippman, "World Bank Package Holds \$1.2 Billion for West Bank, Gaza," Washington Post, May 3, 1994, p. A15.

received.³¹⁹ In the crucial area of law enforcement, the Palestinian Police Force - charged with maintaining public order and forestalling violence by Palestinian organizations opposed to the agreement - had received only \$20 million of the \$47 million pledged for its start-up costs. This was apart from the police force's projected \$90 million annual operating budget.³²⁰

The donor nations' reluctance to fulfil their promises of aid was prompted, in part, by a lack of confidence in the agreement's durability, as well as by concern over the fledgling Palestinian authority's ability to spend the funds efficiently. They additionally viewed with alarm what they considered the authority's lack of accountability for the manner in which the funds were spent.³²¹ These concerns, while justified, ignored the fact that there is an element of risk in every investment.

³¹⁹ B. Burston, "Israel, PLO Join in Seeking International Aid," Reuters, May 6, 1994. The PLO estimated that \$13.4 billion dollars would be needed to finance the first five years of self-rule. See K. Murphy, "Palestinians are Feeling the Money Squeeze, Security: Aid Coordinators have Gathered only \$20 Million of the \$90 Million They Estimate it will Take to Operate Police Force," Los Angeles Times, May 6, 1994, p. 4.

³²⁰ Washington Post, May 6, 1994, p. A30, op. cit.

³²¹ Washington Post, May 8, 1994, p. A23, op. cit. Donor nations were disturbed, as well, over 'Arafat's tendency to monopolize power and were concerned over the possibility of corruption and political favoritism in the Palestinian authority's budgeting of the donated funds. Confidential sources reported to the Washington Post that 'Arafat was seeking ways to bypass the restrictions imposed by the World Bank and the donor countries by dealing directly with individual firms interested in concluding contracts with the PLO. See D. Hoffman, "Flood of Money Promised Palestinians Barely Trickling In," Washington Post, May 29, 1994, pp. A1 and A52; See also T. Lippman, "U.S. Officials Reject Arafat Terms for World Bank Aid," Washington Post, July 8, 1994, p. F3.

While the risks accompanying payment of pledges to the Palestinian authority were especially great in this case, not to do so carried the certainty of continued turmoil and increased instability in the territories.

The Palestinian national movement's struggle against Zionism was widely regarded as Arab nationalism's first 'test case'. All elements of the rivalry between the Arabs and their European opponents were present. Palestinian Arabs, as with Arabs living elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa, had rediscovered their historical and cultural identity and were in the process of redefining themselves as an independent nation. The Zionist movement, which they regarded as European, sought to deprive them of their independence by establishing a Jewish commonwealth on what they viewed as their homeland exclusively.

Until very recently, Palestinian ideology and strategy had been predicated on asserting the legitimacy of their claims to the disputed territory and denying those of their opponents. As long as they received the support of their compatriots in the neighboring Arab countries - and of at least one of the superpowers - this strategy was a feasible one. The loss of this support, following the 1991 Persian Gulf War, dashed all hopes among the Fatah-dominated mainstream Palestinian leadership of defeating Israel by force. They were compelled to accommodate themselves to their enemy's existence, while attempting to salvage at least a piece of their lost homeland.

The Alliance of Palestinian Forces, wedded to the hope of eventually reclaiming all land under Israeli sovereignty, have vowed to continue the struggle until they achieve their goals. The PFLP, which dominates the Alliance, will continue to compete for public support with Palestinian organizations favoring the peace process, attempting to preserve the purity of the ideology which sustained it throughout its years of struggle. It is that ideology which this study will now examine in detail.

Part Two: The PFLP's Ideology, Structure, and Operations

Chapter 8: Ideology

PFLP doctrine is based on three fundamental concepts: 1) the existence of a rivalry between the Western nations and the Arab World, in which the West seeks to exploit the Arab World's resources either through economic influence or physical occupation of territory; 2) Israel's role as the West's primary regional partner in that process; and 3) the need for an ideological and organizational framework to guide Palestinians in combatting this trend ". . . with revolutionary professionalism . . ." and achieving their national aims - even over a period of generations.³²²

The PFLP leadership came to this conclusion while formulating the policies of the ANM, the PFLP's predecessor. Although they sought to create a distinctly Arab liberation ideology, based on what they considered their unique situation, they concluded there were only two doctrines in the world in the 1950's: capitalism and Marxism³²³ and it was Marxism-Leninism which opposed the West and offered the framework best suited for carrying out a successful, long-term revolution.³²⁴

For the moment, however, the ANM concentrated its efforts on establishing the widest possible support base - and although it did not yet consider itself a Marxist-Leninist organization,

³²² Matar, p. 34.

³²³ Matar, p. 45.

³²⁴ Matar, p. 73.

adopted the Leninist principle of ". . . concluding alliances with any political position, whatever the factions are"

³²⁵ Under the general nationalist slogan, "Unity. Liberation. Revenge," the ANM attempted to form working ties with all segments of Palestinian society, including the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic movements.³²⁶ It also developed a pyramidal organizational structure, which conformed to that prescribed by Lenin for revolutionary activity.³²⁷ The ANM, and later PFLP leadership came to rely increasingly on Marxist-Leninist philosophy and the PFLP eventually adopted it officially at its 1969 National Congress, characterizing itself from then on as a ". . . fighting Marxist-Leninist organization."³²⁸ Marxism-Leninism has continued to guide the PFLP since then, despite the drastic political changes which have occurred.³²⁹

³²⁵ Matar, pp. 46-47.

³²⁶ Matar, p. 45.

³²⁷ Matar, pp. 50-54.

³²⁸ "Al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir Filastin [The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine]," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 2 (Damascus: Al-Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984) (hereinafter "Palestinian Encyclopedia - PFLP"), p. 15.

³²⁹ In the months following the PFLP's Fifth National Congress in February 1993, George Habash reaffirmed his organization's continued reliance on ". . . historical dialectical materialism as the essence of Marxism-Leninism and its regulating law and not viewing it as a theory of unchanging dogma" (G. Habash [Interviewed by T. Ahmad], "Fi Hadith Shamil hawlah A'mal al-Mu'tamar al-Watani al-Khamis li al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir Filastin: D. Jurj Habash: Al-Jabhah Wadhihah wa Mutamassikah wa Muwahhadah, wa lan nakhdha'u li Ibtizaz wa Irhab Ahad [In a Comprehensive Discussion on the
(continued...)

A. Marxist-Leninist Theory Explained

Marxist philosophy describes the interactions between man and society which it believes will eventually result in a community free of class distinctions. It employs dialectical materialism as a method of analysis and studies the relationships of society's various social and economic classes to the means of production and the level of the productive forces.³³⁰ Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto, published in 1848, views history as a struggle in which ". . . oppressor and oppressed . . . stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes."³³¹

³²⁹ (...continued)

Activities of the Fifth National Congress of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Dr. George Habash: The Front is Clear, Solid, and United and Will Never Yield to Anyone's Robbery or Terror], "Al-Hadaf, No. 1145, May 2, 1993, pp. 11-24), as an intended demonstration of the doctrine's high degree of adaptability.

³³⁰ T. Bottomore et al., A Dictionary of Marxist Thought (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983) (hereinafter "Bottomore"), p. 279.

Dialectical materialism holds that historical change stems from the clash of two contradictory ideas or forces (thesis and antithesis), in which one idea or force negates the other and results in a higher plain of historical development which fuses the two elements, preserving the best of both (synthesis). See Bottomore, p. 121.

³³¹ D.A. Drennen, ed., Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto: A Full Textual Explication (Woodbury, New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1972) (hereinafter "Drennen"), p. 146.

Leninism, the second component of Marxist-Leninist ideology, is the practical application of Marxist revolutionary theory. Bottomore describes Leninism as ". . . an approach to the seizure of power for and by the proletariat and the building of socialist society, which legitimates revolutionary action by the party on behalf of the working class." Lenin believed that the members of the working class, in the absence of anyone to enlighten them, were unaware of the circumstances of their exploitation by those who controlled the means of production (the managers and businessmen, or 'bourgeoisie'). It was the role of the tightly-knit party to teach the 'exploited masses' of the working class the principles of revolutionary theory and political organization.³³²

Lenin's theory of revolution emphasizes the centrality of class struggle, led by the party, as well as a theory of imperialism. Imperialism, in his view, was capitalism's final stage - a stage laying the groundwork for an international proletarian revolution, to be forcefully initiated and maintained through a ". . . transitional dictatorship of the proletariat."³³³

Lenin believed that the imperialist system had divided the world between the advanced industrial nations and the underdeveloped colonial societies.³³⁴ Members of 'Third World'

³³² Bottomore, p. 279.

³³³ Id., p. 277.

³³⁴ Id., p. 280.

Marxist-Leninist organizations like the PFLP view themselves as the inheritors of the consequences of the imperialist system and have developed their ideologies accordingly. For them, ". . . the central questions have concerned the impact of metropolitan capital [originating in the advanced industrialized nations] on pre-capitalist social structures [in the underdeveloped countries], the emergence of new classes, and the resulting patterns of class alignments and class contradictions that underlie the development of those societies and the conditions of revolutionary struggle."³³⁵ Simply put, these organizations believe it to be in imperialism's interest

. . . to plunder the backward countries' resources, to buy them at the lowest prices, to turn them into manufactured goods, and then to sell them in the markets of these countries at the highest prices. Through this process, imperialism reaps exorbitant profits and increases its capital at the expense of the people, [resulting] in their poverty, despair, and misery.³³⁶

The PFLP ". . . embraces Marxist-Leninist theory as a fundamental strategic line . . ." and, like Lenin, seeks to employ it in order to ". . . rally the masses to gear their efforts in a unified direction to create from this a strong force capable of attaining victory."³³⁷ It believes in the necessity of ". . . a scientific revolutionary ideology . . ." to enable the masses to ". . . understand their enemy, its strong and weak

³³⁵ Id., p. 312.

³³⁶ Strategy 1983, p. 51.

³³⁷ Id., p. 131.

points, and the forces which aid it and are allied with it," as well as their own capabilities.³³⁸ An ideology explains past failures to the revolutionary party's constituents, outlines future goals, and provides a program for attaining them. In short, the party and its ideology constitute both a source of information and a guide for action against the enemy.³³⁹

The absence of an ideology to guide one's actions, according to the PFLP, ". . . means that we fight in an improvised manner, that we make mistakes without being aware of their danger and the method for correcting them, that we delineate our political positions haphazardly without a clear view, the result of which is preparing them once again."³⁴⁰ The PFLP believes that this lack of unified guidance explains Palestinian nationalism's past defeats and it offers its program as a means to avert future failures.³⁴¹

B. Identifying Friend and Foe

At the core of the PFLP's guidance program is an assessment which separates the organization's friends from its enemies. The late Mao Zedong, who was perhaps the best known Asian Marxist leader, first articulated this concept in his 1926 "Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society," where he stressed the importance of ". . . uniting with our real friends in order to attack our

³³⁸ Id., p. 44.

³³⁹ Id., page 46.

³⁴⁰ Id., p. 45.

³⁴¹ Id., pp. 43-44.

real enemies . . ." and distinguishing ". . . real friends from real enemies."³⁴² While Mao confined his analysis to China, the PFLP extended it to include the rest of the world.

The PFLP expanded Mao's analytical scope because it believed that there were components of the enemy camp which its Palestinian constituents had overlooked. This allowed them, at times, to be overconfident in their abilities to contend with the enemy and, at other times, to unjustifiably regard the enemy as invincible.

When we achieve a few partial victories, a general climate prevails among the masses which belittles the adversary's forces, shows contempt for them, and imagines that the battle is easy and quick, and that we can achieve within a short time. When the enemy delivers strong blows against us, we sometimes become fatalistic about our enemy's victories, as if it were an unconquerable force.³⁴³

C. The Enemy Camp's Components

In its assessment of the enemy camp, the PFLP names the major components (Israel, World Zionism, World Imperialism, and Arab Reaction), explains the threat which these elements pose to the Palestinian cause, and analyzes their strengths and weaknesses.

The PFLP regards Israel as its most immediate enemy, blaming it for having driven the Palestinians from their homes in the territory it now controls, and viewing it as the chief impediment

³⁴² Mao Zedong, "Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society," (March 1926), Selected Works, I (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1964, pp. 13-19, reprinted in M. Rejai, ed., Mao Tse-Tung on Revolution and War (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1969) (hereinafter "Rejai"), pp. 138-143.

³⁴³ Strategy 1983, p. 48.

which the Palestinians face in recovering what they regard as their usurped homeland. The PFLP believes that Israel's primary strengths lie in its ability to mobilize its citizens militarily, and to a high degree, ". . . as a result of its perception that it is fighting a life or death battle and that it has no choice but to defend itself to the last soul." It also notes Israel's ". . . clear technological superiority, which is reflected in the level of its armaments and training, and in the dynamics of its movement."³⁴⁴

The PFLP considers Israel a product of the World Zionist movement - dependent upon, and integrally linked with it. It sees World Zionism ". . . as a racist religious movement, [which] attempts to organize 14 million 'Jews' all over the world in support of Israel, in support of its aggressive presence."³⁴⁵ Apart from the moral support which Israel receives from the Zionist movement, the PFLP also perceives a physical threat to Palestinians - and Arabs in general - in the form of ". . . manpower, money, weapons, technological and scientific expertise,

³⁴⁴ Id., p. 49. See also PFLP Central Committee, "Mashru' al-Barnamij al-Siyasi al-Muqaddim li al-Mu'tamar al-Watani al-Khamis li al-Jabhah [The Draft Political Program in Preparation for the Front's Fifth National Congress]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1019, August 26, 1990, (hereinafter "Fifth Congress Draft"), pp. 16-17; G. Khurshid, Palestinian Book Series - 32: A Handbook of the Palestinian Resistance Movement [Silsilah Kutub Filastiniyyah - 32: Dalil Harakah al-Muqawamah al-Filastiniyyah], "The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine," (Beirut: The PLO Research Center, 1971) (hereinafter "Khurshid"), pp. 132-133.

³⁴⁵ Strategy 1983, p. 49.

and alliances concluded under its influence, in addition to propaganda support all over the world."³⁴⁶

The PFLP advocates the study of both Israel and the Zionist movement in great detail in order to identify their weaknesses and ". . . turn them to the advantage of the liberation battle."³⁴⁷ One of these is the disparity of views between the World Zionist and Israeli components, which the PFLP believes it can exploit to its advantage. At present, however, the differences of opinion are not great enough to damage their relationship ". . . since the enemy's image in this camp [sic] remains mobilized and cohesive due to the high-level of technique and precise organization which totally mobilizes the residents of Israel and the Jews of the world to face us in battle."³⁴⁸

The PFLP's hostility towards Israel and the Zionist movement explains its current attacks on targets within Israeli-held territory and past attacks on people and institutions associated with the Zionist movement in Europe and elsewhere outside the Middle East.³⁴⁹ Its enmity towards the United States and other

³⁴⁶ Id., pp. 49-50. See Fifth Congress Draft, p. 17; PFLP, "Al-Mu'tamar al-Watani al-Khamis - Shubbat 1993 [The Fifth National Congress - February 1993]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1146, May 9, 1993, p. 10; PFLP, Bayan 'Amaliyyat Raqm (206) hawla 'Amaliyyat al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah fi Landan [Operations Statement No. 206 on the Popular Front Operations in London], (Leaflet), August 26, 1969.

³⁴⁷ Strategy 1983., p. 51.

³⁴⁸ Id.

³⁴⁹ PFLP's attempt on the life of British businessman and Zionist, Edward Sieff, in December 1973 is a salient example.

Western industrialized nations, as well as their Arab allies, stems from the threat which it perceives in the remaining two elements - 'World Imperialism' and 'Arab Reaction'.

As noted earlier, the PFLP believes that the 'imperialist' countries (the United States and the Western industrialized nations)³⁵⁰ seek to import the natural resources of the underdeveloped nations - after purchasing them at low prices - turn them into manufactured goods, and sell those goods at enormous profit. In this way, the imperialist countries increase their "... capital at the expense of the people [resulting] in their poverty, despair, and misery."³⁵¹

The PFLP considers the Arab World an important target for the industrialized countries because it "... contains great quantities of resources, the most important of which is petroleum, and is considered a wide market for manufactured goods. For this reason, imperialism seeks to preserve this situation so that it can continue the process of accumulating its resources"³⁵² The area's anti-Western movements, of which the PFLP is one, can potentially hinder the industrialized nations' pursuit of this objective and consequently, they are "... determined to strike at, and bring down, any revolutionary

³⁵⁰ 4th Congress, pp. 240-241.

³⁵¹ Strategy 1983, p. 51.

³⁵² Id.

movement which seeks to liberate our homeland and people from this exploitation process."³⁵³

The PFLP views Israel as World Imperialism's local surrogate, through which it suppresses the Arab World's anti-Western movements, thereby preserving the status quo of Western domination.³⁵⁴

Israel is becoming the force and base with which colonialism defends its presence and interests in our homeland. This sort of situation creates an organic cohesion between Israel and the Zionist Movement on the one hand, and World Imperialism on the other hand, since they all have a common interest, namely to strike at the Palestinian and Arab national liberation movement.³⁵⁵

³⁵³ Id., p. 52. See Fifth Congress Draft, p. 18. See also 'A. Al-Qaisi, "'Ala Hamish Azmah al-Khalij: Tawilah Mustadira fi Niyu Yurk. Mufakkirun Amairkiyyun wa 'Arab li Al-Hadaf: Al-Naft Silah al-Wilayat al-Muttahidah li al-Saitarah 'ala al-Nidham al-Dawli al-Jadid [In the Wake of the Gulf Crisis: A Round Table Discussion in New York. American and Arab Intellectuals to Al-Hadaf: Oil is the Weapon of the United States for Gaining Control of the New International Order], "Al-Hadaf, No. 1035, December 23, 1990, pp. 112-121; "Bi Munasabah Dukhul al-Intifadhah Shahriha al-Rabi' wa al-Thalathin: D. Jurj Habash yad'u li Sadd al-'Udwan al-Imbiryali 'ala Biladina [On the Occasion of the Entry of the Uprising into its Thirty-fourth Month: Dr. George Habash calls for blocking the Imperialist Invasion of Our Homeland], "Al-Hadaf, No. 1022, September 16, 1990, p. 17.

³⁵⁴ In February 1969, for example, the PFLP punctuated its bombing of the British Consulate in Jerusalem with the threat that it would "strike with the utmost severity at all who aid and support Israel and imperialist interests will be subject to the blows of our fighting units." PFLP, Bayan 'Amaliyyat Raqm (95) hawla al-Infijar al-Kabir alati waqa'a fi al-Qunsuliyah al-Baritaniyyah fi al-Quds [Operations Statement No. 95 on the Big Explosion which Took Place at the British Consulate in Jerusalem], (Leaflet), February 1969.

³⁵⁵ Strategy 1983, p. 52. See also Fifth Congress Draft, p. 16; Al-Hadaf, May 9, 1993, p. 8.

In practical terms, this relationship ". . . means a great deal of weapons, support, and money to Israel. It means Phantom aircraft, the secrets of the nuclear bomb, and building an economy which can confront the state of siege and continuous war which we are trying to impose on it."³⁵⁶

Arab Reaction, the PFLP's fourth adversary, consists of Arab governments and individuals who benefit from cooperating with the industrialized nations in achieving their regional aims. It is represented by the local phenomena of ". . . feudalism and capitalism."³⁵⁷ The PFLP derives its perception of 'Arab capitalism' from Lenin's characterization of the economic system in the underdeveloped countries as world-wide capitalism's 'weakest link'. Lenin based his assessment on his belief that the bourgeoisie in those areas was weak, but that the local economies had been sufficiently industrialized to create a class-conscious proletariat.³⁵⁸ The PFLP also considers Arab capitalism a weak branch ". . . of World Capitalism, with which it is interwoven and of which it is an integral part."³⁵⁹

In the PFLP's view, Arab capitalism's interests are dependent upon, and protected by, the pro-Western Arab governments, and its beneficiaries are consequently incapable of making independent political decisions. These beneficiaries are

³⁵⁶ Strategy 1983, pp. 51-52.

³⁵⁷ Id.

³⁵⁸ Bottomore, p. 280.

³⁵⁹ Strategy 1983, p. 54.

. . . the merchants, bank owners, feudalists, large landowners, kings, princes, and sheikhs, [who] actually possess [their] millions because of their collaboration with World Capitalism. They came to possess these resources because they either own the commercial agencies for foreign capital goods, are partners in foreign banking institutions and insurance companies, or they are sheikhs, princes, or kings, heading regimes which defend and support colonialist interests, and strike at any mass movement which seeks to liberate our economy from this usurper influence.³⁶⁰

It is in the interest of these sectors, therefore, to continue petroleum exports to the West and to ensure that their countries remain markets for 'foreign goods and capital.'

At most, the PFLP believes, the Arab capitalist stratum can be expected to pay lip service to the local nationalist movements' anti-Zionist and anti-Western positions in order to ". . . resolve some of their partial contradictions with Israel or World Imperialism in their favor." Fundamentally, however, the forces of Arab capitalism have no choice but to oppose ". . . every national liberation movement which seeks to uproot imperialism from our homeland and build the liberated economy which will serve the interests of the masses . . . ," and are consequently irredeemable.³⁶¹

³⁶⁰ Id.

³⁶¹ Id. The Saudi Communist Party, for example, complained in Al-Hadaf, in 1988, that "the Saudi authorities have resumed their attack on the nationalist forces in our country and have waged a concentrated arrest campaign, to include all of the nationalist groups, in order to silence the opposition forces." See "Al-Hizb al-Shuyu'i fi al-Su'udiyyah: Hizbuna yunadhilu bi Thabbah dhidda al-Tawajud al-Amairki wa al-Atlasi fi al-Khalij [The Communist Party in Saudi Arabia: Our Party Struggles Resolutely Against the American and NATO Presence in the Gulf]," Al-Hadaf, No. 894, January 4, 1988, p. 61.

The PFLP considers the capitalist stratum an elite minority in the pro-Western Arab countries and that any ". . . growth of the people's authority . . ." will necessarily lead to the elimination of its privileged status. Whatever conflicts this sector may have with Israel and the West, they are secondary to the more immediate threat which it faces in ". . . the mass movement, which seeks the total downfall of its interests and authority."³⁶² In the PFLP's view, whether or not the groups

³⁶² Strategy 1983, p. 55. As if to illustrate the Bahraini government's concern in this regard, the Bahraini National Liberation Front thanked the PFLP, in a 1988 telegram to Al-Hadaf, for ". . . your solidarity with our party in its struggle against the reactionary Bahraini authorities, your condemnation of the campaign of arrests carried out by the Bahraini intelligence services against the strugglers of our party and the unjust verdicts which they handed down lately to our comrades."

"Jabhah al-Tahrir al-Watani al-Bahraniyyah: Natamannu Mawqif Jabhatikum Iza' Nidhal Shu'ub Mintaqah al-Khalij wa al-Jazirah al-'Arabiyyah [The Bahraini National Liberation Front: We Are Grateful for the Stance of Your Front Regarding the Struggle of the Peoples of the Gulf Region and Arabian Peninsula]," Al-Hadaf, No. 894, January 4, 1988, p. 61.

The Saudi Communist party sent a similar telegram to Al-Hadaf in 1986, complaining that the Saudi authorities were ". . . carrying out repression and terror against the rights of our people and the flower of its sons, who face prosecution, prison, and torture until death in the Saudi prison cells."

"Al-Hizb al-Shuyu'i fi al-Su'udiyyah: Qararat al-Dawrah 16 wa Ittifaq 'Adin-Al-Jaza'ir min Ahm al-Qawa'id li Isti'adah Wahdah al-Munadhdhamah [The Communist Party in Saudi Arabia: The 16th Session Resolutions and the Aden-Algiers Agreement are Among the More Important Foundations for Restoring the PLO's Unity]," Al-Hadaf, No. 846, December 29, 1986, pp. 7-8.

In the same year, Al-Hadaf reported the arrest and torture of a number of anti-government activists by the Bahraini authorities. See "Kull al-Tadhamun ma' Nidhal al-Sha'b al-Bahrani [We are in Complete Solidarity with the Bahraini People's Struggle]," Al-Hadaf, No. 829, August 18, 1986, p. 31.

which it places under the category of Arab Reaction wish to admit it, their interests converge with those of Israel and the West and consequently, they must be considered enemies of the Palestinian national movement to the same degree.³⁶³

D. Levels of Confrontation

In addition to defining the Palestinian movement's enemies, PFLP doctrine also describes the three levels at which they must be confronted: the Palestinian, the Arab, and the international. At each level, it identifies specific governments, organizations, classes, or individuals as either friend or foe and suggests how the movement might advantageously exploit the characteristics of each.

- The Palestinian Level

At the Palestinian level, it carries out this identification through class analysis:

One must define the forces of the revolution at the Palestinian level from a class point of view. To say that the Palestinian people, in all of its classes, is in the same revolutionary situation towards Israel and that all of the Palestinian people's classes have the same revolutionary capacity, in view of their existence without territory and outside their homeland, is idealistic and unscientific. It would be correct to say this if the entire Palestinian people lived under the same conditions, but their living conditions can be distinguished from one another and we cannot ignore this fact. Consequently, one must take note of these

³⁶³ Strategy 1983, p. 62. See Fifth Congress Draft, p. 18. See, e.g. PFLP, Bayan 'Amaliyyat Raqm 129 hawla Nasf Khatt Anabib al-Batrul (al-Tablain) fi al-Jawlan [Statement No. 129 on the Blowing Up of the Petroleum Pipeline (Tapline) in the Golan], (Leaflet), May 31, 1969.

distinctive conditions and their role in deciding whether to adopt or abandon positions.³⁶⁴

The PFLP derived its class-based analysis of its environment from Mao's writings. In his "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party," written in 1939,³⁶⁵ Mao identified six broad classes in Chinese society, all but one of which have parallels in the PFLP's observations.

The first of these, the landlord class, ". . . forms the main social base for imperialist rule in China; it is a class which uses the feudal system to exploit and oppress the peasants, obstructs China's political, economic, and cultural development, and plays no progressive role whatsoever." It is, therefore, a 'target for the revolution'.³⁶⁶

The second class which Mao identifies is the bourgeoisie - the middle or managerial class. He subdivides it into the comprador class or haute bourgeoisie, the national bourgeoisie, and the petite bourgeoisie. Mao charges that the haute bourgeoisie directly serves " . . . the capitalists of the imperialist countries . . ." and is sustained by them. Consequently, it is a 'revolutionary target'. He distinguishes among its subgroups only to the extent that they serve different

³⁶⁴ Strategy 1983, p. 59.

³⁶⁵ "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party" (December 1939), Selected Works, II (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), pp. 319-326 in Rejai, pp. 144-150. See also 'Alush, p. 936.

³⁶⁶ Id., p. 144.

imperialist powers, whose governments set them against one another in order to advance their own interests.³⁶⁷

Mao ascribes a 'dual character' to the national bourgeoisie. "On the one hand," he writes, "it is oppressed by imperialism and fettered by feudalism and consequently is in contradiction with both of them. In this respect, it constitutes one of the revolutionary forces."³⁶⁸ However, this class lacks the will ". . . to oppose imperialism and feudalism thoroughly because it is economically and politically flabby and still has economic ties with imperialism and feudalism." Since this class' primary concern is its economic survival, expediency alone will determine whether it allies itself with the haute bourgeoisie or the revolutionary forces.³⁶⁹

Mao divides the third class of society (the petite bourgeoisie) into four sub-groups: intellectuals, small businessmen, craftsmen, and professionals. Members of this class ". . . all suffer under the oppression of imperialism, feudalism, and the big [haute] bourgeoisie, and they are being driven ever nearer to bankruptcy or destitution." For this reason, Mao considers them - as long as they are under proletarian leadership - ". . . one of the motive forces of the revolution . . ." and ". . . a reliable ally of the proletariat."³⁷⁰

³⁶⁷ Id., p. 145.

³⁶⁸ Id.

³⁶⁹ Id., p. 146.

³⁷⁰ Id.

Mao includes student youth in his intellectual sub-group. In 1939, he characterized them as living ". . . in fear of unemployment or having to discontinue their studies," and as such, they ". . . tend to be quite revolutionary."³⁷¹ Because intellectuals possess 'bourgeois' scientific knowledge and ". . . a keen political sense," which they can use to organize and lead revolutionary activity, as well as disseminate Marxist-Leninist ideology, no revolution can succeed without them.³⁷² Mao faults them, however, for tending ". . . to be subjective and individualistic, impractical in their thinking, and irresolute in action" Until they have totally committed themselves to the revolutionary cause, there is always the danger that the intellectuals might ". . . drop out of the revolutionary ranks at critical moments."³⁷³

The small businessmen employ few or no workers and are constantly at the edge of bankruptcy ". . . as a result of exploitation by imperialism, the big bourgeoisie, and the usurers." The relatively numerous craftsmen also employ few or no workers and ". . . possess their own means of production." Professionals experience similar conditions. Because the members of these sub-groups are not in a position to exploit the proletariat, and are themselves taken advantage of, they are among the revolution's potential allies." Mao faults them for

³⁷¹ Id., p. 147.

³⁷² Id.

³⁷³ Id.

being ". . . easily influenced by the bourgeoisie . . ." and that ". . . consequently, we must carry on revolutionary propaganda and revolutionary work among them."³⁷⁴

Mao divides his fourth social class into three sub-groups: the wealthy, middle-class, and poor peasants. The wealthy peasants constitute ". . . the rural bourgeoisie . . ." and most of them ". . . are semi-feudal in character, since they let a part of their land, practice usury, and ruthlessly exploit the farm laborers." Despite this similarity to the social classes which the revolution seeks to eliminate, the wealthy peasants redeem themselves in Mao's eyes because generally, they too perform manual labor. They serve a temporary purpose in anti-imperialist and can be expected to at least remain neutral in the struggle against the landlord class. One should not regard them, then, ". . . as belonging to the same class as the landlords and should not prematurely adopt a policy of liquidating the rich peasantry."³⁷⁵

Although the members of the middle-class peasantry are economically self-sufficient, they, unlike the wealthy peasants, can only put money aside in plentiful years and only occasionally hire labor. Like the petite bourgeoisie, Mao considers the middle-class peasants to be ". . . exploited by imperialism, the landlord class, and the bourgeoisie." Possessing no political rights, ". . . [n]ot only can the middle peasants join the anti-

³⁷⁴ Id.

³⁷⁵ Id., p. 148.

imperialist revolution and the Agrarian Revolution, but they can also accept socialism," which, in the peasantry's case means collectivization. Consequently, ". . . the whole middle peasantry can be a reliable ally of the proletariat and . . . an important motive force of the revolution."³⁷⁶

Landless tenant farmers form the poor peasantry, according to Mao, and constitute the urban proletariat's rural counterpart, its ". . . natural and most reliable ally," and ". . . the main contingent of China's revolutionary forces."³⁷⁷

Bankrupted peasants constitute the bulk of the Chinese proletariat, which makes them natural allies. Mao includes large and small-scale industrial workers - as well as farm laborers - within this class. Its members possess qualities which Mao believes render them capable of forming the vanguard of the revolution. Of all the sectors of his revolutionary front, Mao considers the proletariat the class most likely to persist in the struggle ". . . because it is subjected to a threefold oppression (imperialist, bourgeoisie, and feudal) which is marked by a severity and cruelty seldom found in other countries." Mao further claims that the proletariat has been led by the communist party since it ". . . appeared on the revolutionary scene . . ." and is consequently ". . . the most politically conscious class in China."³⁷⁸

³⁷⁶ Id.

³⁷⁷ Id., p. 149.

³⁷⁸ Id., p. 149.

Despite its weaknesses (relatively small size, youth, and low educational level), the proletariat constitutes the revolution's primary force. Mao believes that ultimate success requires the proletariat to unite in a common front with other classes in Chinese society who have an interest in changing the established order: "Among all the classes in Chinese society, the peasantry is a firm ally of the working class, the urban petty bourgeoisie is a reliable ally, and the national bourgeoisie is an ally in certain periods and to a certain extent."³⁷⁹ As the revolution's driving force, the proletariat is also its focus. For Mao, this sector is the revolution's primary beneficiary and he analyzes the petite bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie in terms of their utility to the working class.

The final societal class which Mao analyzes is the vagrant class. He blames its existence on ". . . China's status as a colony and semicolony." Because its members are denied legitimate employment, they are forced to earn a living by illegitimate means as ". . . robbers, gangsters, beggars, and prostitutes" He considers this sector unstable and believes that its members are just as likely to be co-opted by the enemy as they are to fight against it. Even if they do join the revolution, vagrants ". . . become a source of roving-rebel and anarchist ideology" and therefore, one must attempt to

³⁷⁹ Id., p. 150.

remold them and ". . . be on guard against their destructiveness."³⁸⁰

The PFLP's own class analysis, of course, differs with Mao's in a number of important respects for the simple and obvious reason that the Palestinians do not live under the same circumstances as China's inhabitants did in the late 1930's and early 1940's. Mao analyzed a Chinese society whose members occupied well-defined social and economic castes. Palestinian society, on the other hand, had been altered by the 1948 exodus. The refugees' loss of property and economic status temporarily blurred class distinctions and the Palestinian social structure is still in the process of reconstituting itself. Consequently, the PFLP's analysis of the Palestinian class structure necessarily involves fewer sectors than did Mao's examination of Chinese society.

The PFLP identifies three distinct classes at the Palestinian level: the proletariat (workers and peasants), the petite bourgeoisie, and the haute bourgeoisie. As in Mao's assessment, the workers and peasants are the revolution's vanguard³⁸¹ and primary beneficiaries, while the petite bourgeoisie plays a supportive role. The PFLP considers the haute bourgeoisie an ally of imperialism - and therefore an enemy

³⁸⁰ Id.

³⁸¹ See, e.g. S. Ahmad, "Dawr al-Tabaqah al-'Amilah wa al-Harakah al-Niqabiyyah fi al-Intifadhah [Role of the Working Class and the Union Movement in the Uprising]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1082, December 22, 1991, pp. 78-81.

of the revolution - but perceives within it latent anti-Israel sentiments which can be aroused, at the appropriate time, to serve the revolution.

For the PFLP, the workers and peasants are ". . . [t]he material of the Palestinian revolution, its pillar, and its fundamental forces" ³⁸² Included in this sector are the ". . . . impoverished petite bourgeoisie." ³⁸³ Members of this class form the destitute majority of Palestinians who ". . . fill all the camps, villages, and poor sections of the cities." It is this environment which, in the PFLP's view, prepares them mentally and physically to persist in what it expects will be a long, drawn-out struggle. Like Mao, the PFLP believes that the ". . . debilitating daily living conditions . . ." under which the workers and peasants live motivate them ". . . to fight and die," and that consequently, their continued participation in the revolution is assured. ³⁸⁴

The PFLP considers itself the tightly-knit party which, like Lenin's, seeks to provide a clearly defined program to guide the workers and peasants and ". . . arm them with the awareness, organization, and means to fight" It characterizes the proletariat as the ". . . backbone of the revolution . . ." and

³⁸² Strategy 1983, p. 64.

³⁸³ Id., p. 63.

³⁸⁴ Id., pp. 64 and 71. See Fifth Congress Draft, pp. 2 and 14.

takes it upon itself to protect its members from ". . . oscillation, deviation, or miscarriage."³⁸⁵

The PFLP, like Mao, considers the professional and intellectual members of the petite bourgeoisie allies of the worker and peasant classes and has temporarily assigned them to lead the revolution until the proletariat is ready to assume the task.³⁸⁶ Because the economic future of the petite bourgeoisie's members is uncertain - in that some of them will prosper and become part of the haute bourgeoisie while others will not and remain allies of the workers and peasants - it is at times in their interest to support the revolution and at others, to oppose it, depending on how this will affect their interests.³⁸⁷

The PFLP finds the possibility that the petite bourgeoisie might subordinate the proletariat's interests to its own - while leading the revolution - particularly worrisome. It fears the petite bourgeoisie's ". . . clever ability to benefit from this alliance [with the working class] by infiltrating the revolution's leadership position, as long as the revolution's

³⁸⁵ Strategy 1983., p. 65. See Fifth Congress Draft, p. 2; H. S. al-Maw'id, "Bi Munasabah al-Awwal min Ayar: Lamahat min Nidhal al-Tabaqah al-'Amilah al-Filastiniyyah [On the First of May: Glimpses of the Struggle of the Palestinian Working Class]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1052, May 5, 1991, pp. 12-15.

³⁸⁶ Strategy 1983, p. 70. See Fifth Congress Draft, pp. 2 and 13.

³⁸⁷ Strategy 1983, p. 71. See also Khurshid, p. 117.

classes, represented by the workers and peasants, do not possess awareness, organization, and competence."³⁸⁸

Because the petite bourgeoisie's support for the revolution is not consistent, its members must be replaced by members of the proletariat in the leadership as soon as they are capable of doing so. Once this occurs, the petite bourgeoisie can ". . . be organized within the Palestinian organizations [such as Fatah and the PLO's administrative apparatus] which content themselves with general liberation slogans, avoid ideological clarity, and live an organizational life which does not require it [sic] to go beyond its capabilities."³⁸⁹

The proletariat (which, unlike the petite bourgeoisie, is guided by a sound revolutionary theory) then, must seize control of the situation and ensure that the latter does not waver from the PFLP's program. The proletariat accomplishes this by cooperating with the petite bourgeoisie when their interests coincide and opposing it when they do not. This ensures the primacy of working class interests. The PFLP believes that ". . . [a]lliance at the appropriate time, according to the programs, and conflict at the appropriate time, over a tangible position or issue, is the way to settle the matter of leadership in the Palestinian arena in the interest of the inhabitants of the camps"³⁹⁰

³⁸⁸ Strategy 1983, p. 68.

³⁸⁹ Id., p. 89.

³⁹⁰ Id., p. 70.

While the PFLP remains uncertain of the petite bourgeoisie's position towards the revolution, it has no doubt about where the interests of the Palestinian haute bourgeoisie lie. Like Mao, the PFLP characterizes the haute bourgeoisie as an ally of imperialist interests. The members of this class serve as middle-men ". . . for foreign goods and foreign insurance companies and banks." Since the PFLP's goal is ". . . to put an end to imperialism and its existence and interests in our homeland . . ." and ". . . inasmuch as our battle against Israel is simultaneously a battle against imperialism," the haute bourgeoisie has no choice but to oppose the revolution.³⁹¹

The PFLP recognizes that there are members of the haute bourgeoisie, ". . . living outside Palestine," who are motivated by guilt and sentimentality to support ". . . commando activity . . ." through monetary contributions. These exceptions, however, ". . . do not mean that we should ignore the general law which will control this class's general position on the revolution."³⁹²

The PFLP's mistrust of the Palestinian upper classes is based on its perception - shared by Israeli historian Benny Morris - that it was the Palestinian Arab workers and peasants who fought and died against the British and the Zionists in the 1930's and 40's, while the upper classes confined their resistance to civil protests.

³⁹¹ Id., p. 72.

³⁹² Id., p. 74. See Fifth Congress Draft, p. 13.

In the late 1940's, 28 of the 32 members of the AHC [Arab Higher Committee. See above.] were from these elite families, and the remaining four were bourgeoisie. None were peasants or proletarians. Some 24 were of urban extraction, and only four or five were originally from the countryside. There was, and remained through 1948, a wide gulf of suspicion and estrangement between urban and rural Arab Palestine, which was to underlie the lack of co-ordination between the towns and their rural hinterland during the hostilities. The elite families by and large had no tradition of, or propensity for, national service and their members did not do military service with the Turks, the British or neighboring Arab armies. Few of the military leaders of the 1936-8 rebellion were from the ruling families. It was mainly a peasant rebellion, with the town-dwellers restricting themselves largely to civil protest (demonstrations, riots and a general strike) and, at a later stage, to interfactional terrorism.³⁹³

This analysis of the Palestinian class structure prior to 1949 is consistent with the PFLP's current perception of the lower classes as the revolution's strike force, which is not only capable of, but has an interest in, bearing the brunt of the responsibility during the struggle. The upper classes, at best, can be expected to assume less hazardous tasks, or at worst, ally themselves with the revolution's enemies.

In conducting the revolution at the Palestinian level, the PFLP has, in the past, sought to form an alliance between proletarian forces like itself and organizations like Fatah and the PLO's umbrella organization, in which each class operates

³⁹³ Morris, p. 12. See also Strategy 1983, p. 56; "Al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah fi al-Bahrain: Lan taflahu Juhud al-A'da' fi Iqtala' al-Thawrah al-Filastiniyyah [The Popular Front in Bahrain: The Enemy's Efforts to Uproot the Palestinian Revolution Will Not Succeed]," Al-Hadaf, No. 846, December 29, 1986, p. 9.

according to its abilities and particular interests,³⁹⁴ but in which the proletariat exercises supreme authority.

- The Regional Level

In the Middle East, the PFLP divides the Arab countries between those with 'reactionary', pro-western governments and those with 'revolutionary regimes', who are anti-western and would support the PFLP's program.

The pro-western governments of countries such as Jordan and Lebanon, as well as Persian Gulf states like Saudi Arabia and Qatar, continue, in the PFLP's view, to be ruled by ". . . Arab capitalism and feudalism."³⁹⁵ Their regimes' interests are linked with ". . . world imperialism, led by the United States." While these countries are, to a certain extent, hostile towards Israel, the PFLP believes that this hostility is temporary and tactical, and never expressed at the expense of links with Israel's benefactors in the West.³⁹⁶ Not only does the PFLP not view these governments as threats to Israel, but, as will be shown later, sees them as Israel's secret allies.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁴ Strategy 1983, p. 80. See Fifth Congress Draft, pp. 14-15.

³⁹⁵ Id., p. 85.

³⁹⁶ Id., p. 86.

³⁹⁷ See, e.g. 'A. Al-Qaisi, "'Ala Hamish Azmah al-Khalij: Tawilah Mustadirah fi Niyu Yurk. Mufakkirun Amairkiyyun wa 'Arab li Al-Hadaf: Al-Naft Silah al-Wilayat al-Muttahidah li al-Saitarah 'ala al-Nidham al-Dawli al-Jadid [In the Wake of the Gulf Crisis: A Round Table Discussion in New York. American and Arab Intellectuals to Al-Hadaf: Oil is the Weapon of the United States for Gaining Control of the New International Order]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1035, December 23, 1990, p. 117.

The PFLP regards the 'revolutionary regimes' as allies, due to their hostility ". . . to imperialism, Zionism, Israel, and Arab reaction . . . ," and because it believes that they have transformed their societies' ". . . economic structure in the direction of socialism." Their battle strategies ". . . are those of the petite bourgeoisie class," which the PFLP identifies as occupying the leadership positions of these governments.³⁹⁸

This class, which does not possess the durability of the proletariat, proved itself incapable of confronting Israel during the June 1967 war and so the relationship with it, as with the petite bourgeoisie at the Palestinian level, ". . . must be one of alliance and conflict at the same time; alliance with them because they are hostile to imperialism and Israel and contradiction with them over their strategy for fighting the battle." The PFLP opposes the petite bourgeoisie's strategy - which entails fighting Israel and imperialism through a conventional military structure and allowing for a peaceful solution to the conflict - while it advocates moving towards ". . . a guerrilla war and a popular liberation war, which the masses, led by the working class, wage on the widest possible front."³⁹⁹ As this study will later demonstrate, the two strategies necessarily conflict, the former being appropriate for consolidating and maintaining political power, and the latter for attempting to seize it.

³⁹⁸ Id., p. 94.

³⁹⁹ Id., p. 95.

The PFLP's strategy for 'confronting imperialism' at the international level, as outlined in the early 1980's, quickly became antiquated with the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991. With the loss of the Soviet Union as its primary source of moral and material support for its efforts,⁴⁰⁰ the PFLP has, for all practical purposes, been set adrift. With its headquarters located in Damascus, and its very existence currently dependent upon Syria's goodwill,⁴⁰¹ the PFLP is in no position to carry out its strategy against Israel and the West unless its host allows it to do so. In apparent anticipation of an eventual Syrian-Israeli peace treaty, the PFLP stated in January 1994 that it had, in any case, shifted the bulk of its operations to Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza and that any resulting reduction in Syrian support would only marginally affect its operational capabilities.⁴⁰² Nonetheless, the PFLP continued to search for

⁴⁰⁰ 4th Congress, p. 236. See also Khurshid, pp. 133-134. In a communication to the Bahraini National Liberation Front, published in Al-Hadaf in 1987, the PFLP promised that "the forces of the Arab National Liberation movement, in cooperation with the revolutionary forces, with the friendly and faithful Soviet Union at their vanguard [emphasis added], will thwart all [imperialist] plans." "Habash yahni'u bi Dhikra Ta'sis Jabhah al-Tahrir al-Watani al-Bahraini: Sanuwasilu al-Juhud li Isti'adah Wahdah M.T.F. 'ala Asas Wataniyyah [Habash Greets the Anniversary of the Founding of the Bahraini National Liberation Front: We Will Make Every Effort to Restore PLO Unity on a Nationalist Basis]," Al-Hadaf, No. 853, February 23, 1987, p. 16.

⁴⁰¹ Id., p. 235.

⁴⁰² U. al-Rantisi, Interview with 'Abd al-Rahim Malluh, member of the PFLP Politburo, Al-Mustaqbal, January 13, 1994, p. 10.

alternative host countries, cultivating ties with Iraq, among others.⁴⁰³

Syria too must contend with its loss of Soviet support. Since the Soviet Union's demise, it has reconsidered its policies towards the United States and its allies, to the point of participating in the U.S.-led campaign against Iraq in 1990 and 1991 and taking the unprecedented step of negotiating directly with Israel, with the declared aim of concluding a peace treaty with its mortal enemy.

All of this, of course, directly contradicts the principles outlined in the PFLP's 1983 strategy, which views the United States as the head of the enemy imperialist camp and Israel as the usurper of its homeland - a foe which must be defeated, not accommodated. Yet, maintaining strong relations with the Syrian government has remained an important policy goal of the PFLP,² which seeks ". . . a close Palestinian-Syrian alliance on a clear nationalist and pan-Arab basis in order to rally the forces of the Palestinian and Syrian peoples in confronting the Zionist-imperialist alliance and to guarantee common nationalist and pan-Arab interests." In the desperate hope that Hafiz Al-Assad's

⁴⁰³ This process began shortly after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and has continued to the present. See "Fi Awwal Ziyarah mundhu 'Asharah A'wam: Habash yazuru Baghdad wa yajri fiha Muhadathat Hamah ma' al-Ra'is al-'Iraqi Saddam Hussain wa Taha Yasin Ramadhan wa Tariq 'Aziz [In his First Visit in Ten Years: Habash visits Baghdad holds Important Discussions with Iraqi President Saddam Hussain, Taha Yasin Ramadhan, and Tariq 'Aziz]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1021, September 9, 1990, pp. 10-11; Baghdad, INA in Arabic, 1820 gmt, January 22, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-015, January 24, 1994, p. 35.

government may have retained an ounce of Arab nationalist integrity, the PFLP now endeavored (prior to its split from the PLO in September 1993) to ". . . safeguard the right of the PLO and its factions to engage in political, organizational, mass, and informational activity . . ." in Syria.⁴⁰⁴

Syria's reluctance to permit the PFLP to engage in attacks on Israel extends to neighboring Lebanon, where it exerts a controlling influence over the government of President Ilyas Hirawi. In April 1991, the Lebanese government implemented a decision to extend its authority over all of Lebanon by ordering all unofficial armed groups to demobilize.⁴⁰⁵ It lent credibility to this policy by capturing and trying four PFLP members, armed with automatic weapons, who were on their way to attack Israeli targets in southern Lebanon.⁴⁰⁶

Even prior to this decisive action, the PFLP seemed to sense a deterioration in relations with its Lebanese hosts and outlined a proposal, in the preparatory document to its Fifth National

⁴⁰⁴ Fifth Congress Draft, p. 12.

⁴⁰⁵ "Boueiz: D'Abord la Sourverainete et la Dignite du Liban [Boueiz: Before All Else, Lebanon's Sovereignty and Dignity]," L'Orient Le Jour, April 2, 1991, p. 3.

⁴⁰⁶ "Lebanese Troops Capture Guerrilla Squad," Reuters, April 19, 1991; "Four Palestinians Arrested in South Lebanon," Xinhua General Overseas News Service, April 19, 1991. See also "Al-Rafiq Abu Ahmad Fu'ad yad'u li Waqf al-Qital wa Himlat al-I'tiqal wa al-Bad' bi al-Hiwar [Comrade Abu Ahmad Fu'ad calls for Halting the Fighting and Beginning the Dialogue]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1059, July 7, 1991; 'A. Sadiq, "Niz' al-Silah al-Filastini fi Lubnan lan yu'addi ila Insihab Isra'ili min al-Janub! [Disarming the Palestinians will not Lead to an Israeli Withdrawal from the South]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1060, July 14, 1991, pp. 22-23.

Congress, which called for: 1) improving its ties with the Lebanese government; 2) making arrangements for continuing armed attacks on Israel from Lebanese territory and for protecting its camps from attacks by the Israelis and hostile Lebanese; 3) concluding agreements with the Lebanese government to guarantee freedom of movement, organization, and activity for Palestinians in Lebanon; and 4) strengthening alliances with nationalist organizations and forging ties with Islamic organizations.⁴⁰⁷ These measures, if successful, would restore the PFLP to its semi-autonomous status in the country, enabling it to resume its cross-border attacks against Israel. For now, however, the PFLP must bide its time and wait.

- The International Level

During the 1980's, the PFLP regarded the Soviet Union as the principle benefactor of leftist national liberation movements world-wide and credited the Viet Cong's successes against the United States in Vietnam to Soviet support for that effort.⁴⁰⁸ It also considered the Soviet Union and the communist bloc a

⁴⁰⁷ Fifth Congress Draft, pp. 11-12. The PFLP defended its armed presence in Lebanon by claiming that its operatives "... ne sont pas des milices engendrees par la guerre au Liban . . . , " but rather "... [i]ls etaient presents dans ce pays bien avant la guerre, pour combattre l'ennemie sioniste et liberer la Palestine" and that the PLO "... ne fera pas obstacle a l'extension de l'autorite libanaise sur tout le territoire libanais." "'Les Palestiniens Decide a Garder Leurs Armes au Liban' Affirme Zeid Wehbe ['The Palestinians Decide to Retain their Arms in Lebanon', Zeid Wehbe Asserts]," L'Orient Le Jour, April 2, 1991, p. 3.

⁴⁰⁸ 4th Congress, p. 23.

deterrent to aggression by the United States and its allies against third world countries.⁴⁰⁹

The national liberation movements which formerly relied on the Soviet Union and other socialist countries for support sought, in the PFLP's view, to bring about a ". . . national democratic revolution . . ." in Third World countries which became independent following World War II. The PFLP considered this revolution necessary for the defeat of neo-colonialism, a euphemism for what it viewed as undue western influence over the economies of these nations. It was these liberation movements that would overthrow what it deemed the local bourgeois leadership that served as a mere agent for western capitalism and rendered the population ". . . incapable of accomplishing the economic liberation of their countries."⁴¹⁰

In furthering its goal of combatting western economic and political influence in the Arab world, to which it attributed Israel's continued existence, the PFLP committed itself to ". . . [c]ontributing actively, side by side with the forces of liberation, progress, peace and socialism, to the international struggle against imperialism, fascism and reaction." Specifically, this meant ". . . [c]ultivating and consolidating relations with the national liberation movements in the 'Third World'," as well as ". . . with the progressive and democratic forces, and the working class parties in the capitalist

⁴⁰⁹ Id., p. 21.

⁴¹⁰ Id., p. 19.

countries."⁴¹¹ The PFLP's expressions of support for such organizations as the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front in El Salvador⁴¹², the National Liberation Front in Bahrain⁴¹³, and the Japanese Red Army⁴¹⁴ are derived from this policy.

The PFLP's international strategy for the 1990's continues to advocate strengthening its alliance with ". . . the socialist countries, the working class parties in the capitalist countries, the international forces of democracy and peace, and the nationalist and progressive parties, forces, and regimes in the third world countries on the basis of the goals of the common struggle."⁴¹⁵

⁴¹¹ Id., p. 237.

⁴¹² Id., p. 240.

⁴¹³ Id., p. 242. See also "Saif Bin 'Ali, Al-Amin al-'Am li Jabhah al-Tahrir al-Watani al-Bahraniyyah: Intilaqah al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah ashamat Kathiran fi Ta'miq wa Tawsi' Nidhalat al-Sha'b al-Filastini al-Batal [Saif Bin 'Ali, Secretary General of the Bahraini National Liberation Front: The Popular Front's Founding has Done Much to Deepen and Widen the Heroic Palestinian People's Struggles]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1035, December 23, 1990, p. 32.

⁴¹⁴ "Al-Dhikra al-Hadiya wa al-'Ishrin li Intilaqah al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir Filastin: Al-Jaish al-Ahmar al-Yabani [The Twenty-first Anniversary of the Founding of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - The Japanese Red Army]," Al-Hadaf, No. 946, February 12, 1989, p. 24. See also "Al-Jaish al-Ahmar al-Yabani: Musammimun 'ala Ta'ziz al-Nidhal al-Mushtarak dhidda al-Imbiryaliyyah wa al-Sahyuniyyah [The Japanese Red Army: We are Determined to Invigorate the Joint Struggle Against Imperialism and Zionism]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1035, December 23, 1990, p. 35.

⁴¹⁵ Fifth Congress Draft, p. 23. See also Al-Hadaf, June 13, 1993, pp. 32-33.

international bloc," served only to highlight its nomadic condition.⁴¹⁷

Despite the absence of a firm alliance with any government or organization capable of providing it with political and material support, the PFLP continues to search for a means to perpetuate its long-standing policy of opposing the United States and its allies. In the Middle East, the pro-western Arab states remain the objects of the PFLP's wrath for their alliance with the United States and their alleged complicity in that country's support for Israel, the Palestinians' primary foe in the region. The PFLP's efforts then, continue to focus on finding the means to eradicate Israel and strike at local western interests, rather than on altering its aims, in recognition of the limits imposed upon it by its newly-acquired itinerant status.

⁴¹⁷ Fifth Congress Draft, p. 24. See also Al-Hadaf, June 13, 1993, pp. 32-33.

Chapter 9: Structure

While the PFLP's ideology defines its broad strategic aims, its structure and bylaws furnish it with the means to carry them out. The PFLP's Nidham Al-Dakhili or Internal Rules provides a comprehensive guide to its organizational structure and membership regulations. The 1973 edition, included in the English-language Tasks of the New Stage, and the 1981 edition, is published as a separate document by the PFLP's Information Department. A careful comparison of the two editions reveals significant disparities. For example, in the 1981 edition, the minimum period of PFLP membership, before being eligible for election to the Central Committee, was lengthened from three to ten years (Article 29) and the 1973 edition's maxim that ". . . every politically conscious member is a militant and every militant member is politically conscious . . ." (Article 16) was dropped from the 1981 version.⁴¹⁸ Consequently, this evaluation will refer to the 1981 edition in order to remain as current as possible, mindful that the PFLP may have issued subsequent versions of the Internal Rules.

A. Organizational Levels

The PFLP's organizational subdivisions are organized both geographically or functionally. They may pertain either to a geographic area or an area of responsibility (the External Branch, for example, which handles the PFLP's foreign operations). The PFLP's base organizations are circles and

⁴¹⁸ This principle was retained, however, in Strategy 1983.

cells, which meet at members' homes or workplaces. These, in turn, are grouped into leagues, districts, regions, and branches. Thereafter, the PFLP is organized at what it calls the "national level," where the top leadership makes its decisions through the National Congress, the Central Committee, and the Politburo (Article 25(1)).

The National Congress is the PFLP's supreme governing body. The PFLP Central Committee is the PFLP's highest authority between National Congress sessions and the PFLP Politburo is its highest authority between Central Committee sessions (Article 25(2)(a)). The PFLP operates similarly at the branch, regional, and district levels. The congresses at these levels are called Supervisory Congresses, and Supervisory Commands govern the organization between Congress sessions (Article 25(2)(b)).

Theoretically, PFLP members choose their leaders through free elections (Article 25(3)). They vote for candidates by secret ballot and are permitted to criticize the candidates' positions (Article 25(4)). The PFLP holds its elections according to the principles of "democratic centralism." In terms of elections, this means that although voting occurs at the base level, the National Congress must approve the candidate lists. It may even remove the names of candidates it does not like. Should the National Congress reject the entire candidate list, it may nominate its own. The National Congress may also censor the candidate lists at the supervisory levels (Article 25(5)).

At the Central Committee and Politburo levels, a certain percentage of the members are automatically "reelected," thereby satisfying the "continuity" principle (Article 25(6)). The PFLP also permits interim elections under certain circumstances, but, the Internal Rules do not specify what those circumstances are (Article 25(7)).

B. Chain of Command

Local PFLP organizations may decide on matters pertaining to the special conditions under which they operate. In case of a conflict between local-level decisions and those of the higher-level bodies, the latter's decisions prevail (Article 25(10)).

Democratic centralism permits free discussion of unresolved issues. However, once these issues have been settled, discussion ceases and PFLP members must adhere unfailingly to whatever decisions have been made. If a lower-level organizational group determines that a high-level decision does not apply to its particular situation, it must ask the higher-level organization to revise it. The higher-level organization, however, may compel the local organization to implement its decision nevertheless (Article 25(11)).

Higher-level PFLP organizations also have the final say on forming new PFLP cells and dissolving existing ones (Article 25(12)). All organizational levels may establish and operate whichever committees or organizations they deem necessary to help them to accomplish their missions (Article 25(13)).⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁹ Khurshid, pp. 114-115.

As previously stated, the National Congress is the PFLP's supreme governing body (Article 27(1)). It is elected to a four-year term (Article 27(2)) and consists of elected representatives from the PFLP's organizational groups (Article 27(3)). The National Congress discusses and decides upon Central and Oversight Committee reports (Article 27(7)(a)), formulates and amends the PFLP's programs and internal rules (Article 27(7)(b)), discusses and decides upon "revolutionary issues (Article 27(7)(c))," and elects Central and Oversight Committee members (Article 27(7)(d)).

The Central Committee is the PFLP's second-highest governing body whose members simultaneously serve in the National Congress (Article 27(4)). The Central Committee may appoint a limited number of "employee members (a'dha' 'Amilin)," as long as their number does not exceed fifteen percent of the elected members. It may also appoint a certain number of observers as long as their number does not exceed one-third of the "employee members (Article 27(5))."

The Central Committee acts on the National Congress' behalf when the National Congress is not in session. It carries out the National Congress' and Politburo's decisions (Article 28(2)). The National Congress elects the Central Committee to a four-year term, designates its members and their alternates, and fills empty seats with alternates. One must be a PFLP member for at least nine years to be eligible for Central Committee membership (Article 28(3)).

The Central Committee meets once every six months at the Politburo's invitation (Article 28(4)). It elects the PFLP General Secretary, Deputy-General Secretary, and the Politburo's members and alternates (Article 28(5)). Its primary task is to discuss and decide upon Politburo reports. It has the power to declare a state of emergency within the PFLP and to completely or partially suspend the Internal Rules (Article 28(7)).

The Politburo administers the PFLP between Central Committee sessions (Article 29(1)) and implements the decisions of both the National Congress and the Central Committee (Article 29(2)). The Central Committee elects the Politburo's members and fills its vacant seats. One must have been a PFLP member for at least ten years in order to be eligible to serve on the Politburo (Article 29(3)).

The PFLP's control mechanisms at the branch, regional, and district levels are similar to that at the highest level in most respects. There are exceptions, however. The Branch Congress is elected to a two-year term and its members must have served the PFLP for at least five years (Article 30(1)(a)). It is convened at least once a year (Article 30(1)(c)). It also elects representatives to the National Congress (Article 30(1)(e)). The Regional and District Congresses are also elected to a two-year term (Article 31(1)(b)) and are convened at least once a year (Article 31(1)(c)). The Regional and District Supervisory Commands are each elected to a two-year term (Article 31(2)(a)). District Command members must have served the PFLP for at least

three years and Regional Command members must have served at for least four years (Article 31(2)(b)).

Circles and cells are the PFLP's base organizations. They may hold their meetings at members' homes or at their workplaces, as long as the group comprises at least three members (Article 32(1)). The circle, which numbers from three to ten people, is the level which prepares trainees to become full PFLP members (See section on membership, below). A cell is generally responsible for a circle and appoints one of its members to guide the trainees through their pre-membership period (Article 32(2)).

The cell numbers from three to ten members and constitutes the most basic PFLP level. Each cell has a leader and a deputy leader (Article 32(3)).

A group of three to five cells within a neighborhood, village, or workplace constitutes a league (Article 32(4)). A group of leagues within a certain geographical area constitutes a district (Article 32(5)).

The League Congress is attended by the members of all the cells that are affiliated with it. It elects the league leadership and representatives to the District Congress. Members of the league leadership must have served the PFLP for at least two years (Article 32(6)). The league leadership confirms all cell decisions on membership and discipline (Article 32(7)).

C. Membership

The cells indoctrinate members through the study of PFLP literature and Marxist-Leninist theory (Article 32(8)(a)). The

cells also instill habits in the members which they believe will prepare them to aid the PFLP in its cause. They train them ". . . to be daring, to think scientifically, to maintain discipline, and to obey consciously." The cells discourage their members from adopting such traits as ". . . individualism, selfishness, laziness, carelessness, deviance, and avoidance of facing their problems scientifically or enhancing their creative talents (Article 32(8)(b))." The cells recruit new members, collect dues (Article 32(8)(c)), impose PFLP discipline (Article 32(8)(d)), encourage members to engage in constructive criticism and to be selfless (Article 32(8)(e)), remain in tune with the feelings, views, and demands of the 'masses (Article 32(8)(f)), and organizing the 'masses' politically and economically (Article 32(8)(g)(h)(i)(j)).

The process of becoming a PFLP member is taken lightly neither by the organization nor by the candidate. The organization closely monitors each candidate, evaluating his or her personality, ability, and depth of commitment to the Palestinian cause as advocated by the PFLP. This monitoring occurs prior to the candidate's recommendation for training, during the training period, and during each of the stages which bring the candidate/member ever closer to the PFLP's inner circle. The following is a description of this process, as well as of the rules which govern a member's status once he has been accepted.

To be considered for PFLP membership, the candidate must be a Palestinian and/or an Arab (Article 17(3))⁴²⁰ who is at least sixteen years old (Article 17(3)(f)) and must accept the PFLP's political program and its internal rules (Article 17(3)(b)). The candidate must already be a participant in one of the PFLP's non-combatant organizations and must be prepared to participate in combat when asked to do so (Article 17(3)(c)). Once accepted into the PFLP's ranks, the candidate must pay periodic dues (Article 17(3)(e)) and promptly execute all of the organization's decisions and orders (Article 17(3)(d)). The candidate must also be from one of what the PFLP defines as 'revolutionary classes' (Article 17(3)(a)).

The PFLP obligates each member to dedicate his entire being to achieving the organization's aims (Article 18(1)), mobilize and educate 'the masses' (Article 18(2)), study Marxist-Leninist principles (Article 18(3)), keep abreast of the Arab and Palestinian situations by reading all PFLP books, magazines, newspapers, statements, and communiques (Article 18(4)), work to maintain ideological unity and harmony within the PFLP (Article 18(5)), carry out all PFLP orders promptly and completely (Article 18(6)), criticize the PFLP constructively (Article 18(7)), serve 'the masses'' interests and maintain strong links with them (Article 18(8)), be candid with the PFLP (Article

⁴²⁰ The paragraph's pertinent phrase reads "Every Palestinian and Arab citizen who chooses the path of participating in the Arab revolution has the right to be a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine if the following conditions are met:"

18(9)), maintain all PFLP secrets in confidence (Article 18(10)), guard against being influenced by enemy propaganda (Article 18(11)), eschew all perceived traits of the bourgeoisie,⁴²¹ and adopt the traits of the working class⁴²² (Article 18(12)).

The PFLP allows each of its members to elect representatives and to be elected (Article 19(1)), discuss all problems through organizational channels and make suggestions on an issue prior to a final decision (Article 19(2)), offer constructive criticism, within the PFLP framework, against any PFLP leader (Article 19(3)), defend himself against criticism before decisions are taken against him (Article 19(4)), and direct any problems, criticisms, or questions to any PFLP organizational unit, including the central leadership (Article 19(5)).

Once accepted into the membership process, the candidate is conferred the title of trainee (Article 20(1)). In order to be regarded as a trainee, the candidate must submit an application and be recommended by at least two PFLP members. The candidate's application must be approved by a cell on a higher level than that of the members who recommended him (Article 20(2)).

Each recommending member must write a detailed report on the candidate in which he assesses the candidate's thought processes, capabilities and past history and behavior. The recommending

⁴²¹ Selfishness, vanity, ostentation, individualism, pretentiousness, "routinism," disdain for mundane tasks, and vengeful behavior.

⁴²² "the desire to learn, sincere comradery [sic], and full involvement in the issues of the party and the revolution."

member then explains the PFLP's political program and internal rules and regulations to the candidate and clarifies the candidates responsibilities and obligations to the PFLP. The recommending member is held personally responsible for having recommended the candidate (Article 20(3)).

D. Training

If the candidate has been favorably reviewed, the recommending member informs him of his acceptance to the organization as a trainee and explains to him the training program and its aims (Article 20(4)).

The training period lasts from six months to a year, although it may be prolonged in certain circumstances. During the training period, the trainees are grouped into circles and are taught the PFLP's political program, as well as its internal rules and regulations. The trainee is continuously observed and evaluated for qualification for full PFLP membership (Article 20(5)). The trainee has the same rights and responsibilities as a full member and must pay dues. He is not allowed to vote however, and cannot be elected to a position of authority (Article 20(8)).

At the end of his training period, the cell discusses the trainee's eligibility for full membership. If the trainee is accepted, higher levels of the PFLP must confirm his acceptance. At that point, he is a full member with all rights and privileges associated therewith.

Likewise, if the trainee is deemed ineligible, higher levels must also confirm this. The trainee then either has his probationary period extended, is regarded as a friend of the PFLP without membership privileges, or is alienated from the organization (Article 20(6)).

This membership process is the only acceptable form of recruitment unless otherwise decided by the PFLP's regional and central commands (Article 20(7)).

Every member has the right to request departure from the PFLP. This request must be approved by his organizational level and must be confirmed by higher levels (Article 21).

If a member is ever absent for no legitimate reason, fails to participate in PFLP activities for four consecutive meetings, or fails to pay dues for three consecutive months his case must be discussed at his own organizational level.

If the member is found to have lost touch with the PFLP of his own free will, then his cell conveys its decision to remove him to higher PFLP levels for confirmation. The ex-member's name is then removed from the PFLP's records (Article 22).

The PFLP requires that the transfer of a member from one section to another take place in an orderly fashion. The organizational unit to which the member is transferred defines his responsibilities based upon his past experience. Either the member or his former unit may object to these responsibilities, whereupon the problem is discussed at higher organizational levels (Article 23).

E. Penalties

Penalties vary according to the gravity of the violation. The PFLP has established five penalty grades. They are: warning, probation, membership suspension and expulsion (Article 24(1)). "Membership suspension" means that the member is relegated to the status of a trainee (Article 24(2)).

The PFLP imposes penalties in order to strengthen organizational discipline and to ensure prompt execution of decisions and internal regulations. These penalties also serve to prevent ideological deviation and to discourage activities which might harm the organization, its members and its constituents. With the exception of expulsion, the PFLP imposes penalties in order to enlighten the member. It seeks to create within him a sense of discipline and to develop his consciousness and initiative (Article 24(3)).

Penalties are recommended by the member's unit and approved by the unit immediately above it. In the case of expulsion, approval must be secured from the unit immediately above that one (Article 24(4)). Leading PFLP members who are recommended for expulsion are considered suspended until their expulsion is approved by the congresses which elected them (Article 24(5)).

A member who may be subject to penalties has the right to defend himself and to present his point of view. When a decision has been made, the member is informed of it and the reasons behind it. If the decision is unfavorable, the member has the right to appeal it (Article 24(6)).

Since expulsion is the highest of 'normal' penalties, it is only carried out after a careful and balanced inquiry (Article 24(7)). The member has the right to appeal his expulsion before the Central Committee or the Central Oversight Committee, but must do so within two months of the decision to expel him (Article 24(8)).

Under dire conditions (what the PFLP terms 'armed combat'), certain violations may call for penalties which go beyond those outlined in the internal regulations. These penalties are special forms of retribution which are determined and carried out by the PFLP Congress (Article 24(9)).

The PFLP's stringent membership requirements are deemed crucial to maintaining organizational discipline and morale and to protecting the organization from outside harm. The process allows the organization to adjust the requirements for special circumstances and there is no reason to assume that all candidates for membership follow the guidelines exactly.

The PFLP has a political goal - the ". . . complete liberation of Palestine," which is to be accomplished through "armed struggle."⁴²³ The PFLP seeks to build a mass national

⁴²³ Sections dealing with members' responsibilities and the relationship between the politically and militarily oriented members, unless otherwise indicated, refer to information contained in The Political and Organizational Strategy [Istratiyyah al-Siyasiyyah wa al-Tandhimiyah], PFLP Central Information Department. This publication went through four editions. The author was only able to obtain the English version of the 1969 first edition [A Strategy for the Liberation of Palestine], published in Amman, Jordan. The Arabic version of the 1970 second edition was also published in Amman and is the (continued...)

movement, from which will emanate not only those who actually perform the armed assaults, but also those who give them material, organizational and moral support. The long term battle against the enemy must constantly be escalated. The rank-and-file must be mobilized to carry out the armed assault, support it, and prolong it by replacing those who are either killed or captured. For this reason, the PFLP believes that both those who physically engage the enemy and those who support them must be aware of the reasons for doing so and must continually be reminded of them in order to maintain a constant momentum in the its long-term liberation effort.

F. Integrated Military and Political Components

Moreover, any attack which the PFLP carries out is said to have a political purpose, which must be made known both to the enemy and those whom the PFLP claims to represent. Since the PFLP's operations cause little material damage in compared to what a conventional armed force is capable of causing, the political message accompanying them are components which are crucial to their success. Consequently, both the military and political apparati are equally important to the PFLP because they support one another.

⁴²³ (...continued)

text to which this analysis refers [pp. 160-167]. The 1975 third edition was unobtainable. No place of publication was given for the Arabic version of the 1983 fourth edition. It is significant that the PFLP's definition of its members' responsibilities, as well as of the relationship between its military and political personnel have remained constant in each of the four editions.

The PFLP is wary of limiting itself to creating a mechanical military structure whose operatives do not know why they bear arms. The political apparatus supports the military by providing answers to both of these questions. It seeks to counteract the effects of enemy propaganda on the operatives, define their relationship with outside organizations and indoctrinate them in order to guide them to the PFLP's ultimate objective.

On the other hand, the PFLP has given the political apparatus a military structure and considers it a reserve for the military apparatus. Political operatives are expected to carry out military duties as needed. Without such an arrangement, the PFLP fears a polarization of the political and military apparatus, in which case the political operatives might take political or moral advantage of their connection with armed activity without being part of the military apparatus. A political operative who affiliates himself with the organization's armed activities by wearing a military uniform and insignia without being ready to participate in it himself breeds resentment among the military operatives toward his attitude and makes cooperation between the two apparatus extremely difficult. For this reason, political operatives are required to live in the same conditions as those who fight.

The ideal PFLP member is both politically aware and militarily competent. The PFLP seeks to create a system in which it can move its members between military and political tasks interchangeably. In anticipation of this, participants in the

organization's internal education system are required to take part in both military and political courses.

In 1980, the commander of the PFLP's military college explained its educational philosophy in an interview with Al-Hadaf:

Because the aim of the battle is the realization of political goals and because the graduates of the college courses are cadres who command military activity, they must acquire a theoretical, organizational and political awareness and the military and college leadership give this aspect great importance. In addition, both the leadership and the students at the college experience its [political] party and organizational life, time permitting, since in addition to the regular programs, there are political preparation lectures given by the Front's political cadres.

Political party life, the study of military science and revolutionary discipline enable these cadres to carry out orders and instructions given by their superiors and to take initiatives in carrying out the general instructions and plans of the military leadership and turn them into true builders of conscious and disciplined fighting units, always ready to fight the enemy and to defend our masses. . . .⁴²⁴

The PFLP's leadership effort is directed primarily toward battle with the enemy and all organizational, political, informational, and financial efforts are linked with it.

⁴²⁴ "Qa'id al-Kuliyyah al-'Askariyyah li al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir Filastin li 'al-Hadaf': Kull Nuqtah 'Araq fi al-Tadrib tawfuru Qatrah Damm fi al-Ma'rakah [The Commander of the Military College of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine to Al-Hadaf: Every Drop of Sweat During Training Will Increase Bloodshed In Battle]," Al-Hadaf, No. 508, October 11, 1980, p. 13.

G. Interlocking Operational Sections

The PFLP considers itself a fighting political party and has organized itself to support the efforts described above by dividing the organization into five interlocking sections. The first section carries out armed operations. The second section provides military operational support (presumably intelligence gathering, ordnance and quartermaster duties, etc.). The third section provides non-military operational support (termed ". . . the popular resistance," which presumably would provide food and shelter to operatives inside enemy territory). The fourth section indoctrinates and motivates the rank-and-file. The fifth section provides financial and administrative support and spreads the battle's political message.⁴²⁵

The PFLP does not confine its political and organizational activity to the Middle East. It urges its operatives to initiate such activity among Palestinians who have emigrated to Western Europe, North and South America, and elsewhere. It considers the potential of these Palestinians a precious commodity to be utilized in every possible way. It seeks to accomplish this task by concluding international alliances with left-wing, and other, movements and organizations, and by directing the efforts of its constituents residing abroad.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁵ Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Tasks of the New Stage (Beirut: Foreign Relations Committee, 1973), pp. 110-111. See also Khurshid, p. 118.

⁴²⁶ Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Tasks of the New Stage (Beirut: Foreign Relations Committee, 1973), pp. 110-111.

The PFLP sees itself as a living organism whose goal it is to reverse Israel's establishment and to acquire for the Palestinians the rights which it feels they have always deserved. Each of the PFLP's components is essential to its existence and each is given equal importance.

Chapter 10: Operating Environments and Methods

The PFLP's cell-based hierarchy enables it to function either openly or underground, depending on whether its surroundings are friendly or hostile, and allows cell leaders to make independent decisions in the event that circumstances do not permit them to communicate directly with their superiors. The environments in which PFLP cells might operate range from those in which they operate freely and openly to hostile environments in which PFLP membership is illegal or draws suspicion - necessitating a covert existence.

A. Friendly Environments

In a completely friendly environment, such as the 'state within a state' which the Palestinian organizations in Lebanon operated between 1969 and 1982, the PFLP operates freely and openly. During this period, the PFLP, along with the other Palestinian groups, was able to administer its affairs without the Lebanese government being able to interfere.⁴²⁷ It maintained links with scores of organizations and governments (both Middle Eastern and non-Middle Eastern),⁴²⁸ ran its own communal institutions,⁴²⁹ and conducted cross-border and foreign

⁴²⁷ Bekhor, pp. 181-182.

⁴²⁸ See generally PFLP Central Information Committee, Al-Tagrir al-Shahri [Monthly Report], January 1981; PFLP Central Information Committee, Al-Tagrir al-Shahri [Monthly Report], April 1979.

⁴²⁹ Peteet, pp. 142-174.

operations against Israeli and Western targets.⁴³⁰ By the middle of 1981 - following the conclusion of a cease-fire agreement between Israel and the PLO - the Lebanese government had lost control over the situation to such an extent that the PFLP was able to declare with impunity that its ". . . operations will continue from southern Lebanon despite the adoption of the cease-fire resolution on the level of artillery and missile bombardment and that the Front's external operations will not cease."⁴³¹

The environment which permitted the freedom of action that the Palestinian organizations enjoyed in Lebanon prior to the 1982 Israeli invasion might be characterized as 'friendly' only when compared with the restrictive conditions imposed upon them everywhere else. In fact, the Palestinian groups were able to

⁴³⁰ See, e.g. PFLP, Bayan 'Amaliyyat Raqm (290) hawla Nisf al-Anabib wa Mahattah Dhakh al-Tablain fi Janub Lubnan [Operations Statement No. (290) on the Blowing Up of the Pipeline and Pumping Station in Southern Lebanon (Leaflet) January 28, 1970; PFLP, 'Amaliyyat al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir Filastin khilala Shahr Shubbat/Febrayir 1971 [Operations of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine During the Month of February 1971], (Leaflet); Arshif Al-Hadaf [Al-Hadaf Archive], "'Al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah' tutalibu Italia bi I'adah Sarukhin Sufyati al-San' ['The Popular Front' Demands that Italy Return the Two Soviet-made Missiles]," Al-Liwa', June 8, 1990, no page number; Arshif Al-Hadaf, "Al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah: 'Amaliyyah fi Athina dhidda Shabakah li al-Istikhbarat al-Isra'iliyyah [The Popular Front: An Operation in Athens Against an Israeli Intelligence Network]," Al-Safir, July 27, 1981, no page number.

⁴³¹ Al-Hadaf Archive, "Abu 'Ali Mustafa: 'Amaliyyatuna 'abra al-Hudud al-'Arabiyyah sata'khudhu Tabi'an Naw'iyyan Jadidan [Abu 'Ali Mustafa: Our Operations Across Arab Borders Will Take on a New Type of Characteristic]," Al-Safir, August 15, 1981, no page number. See also R. Khalidi, Under Siege: P.L.O. Decisionmaking During the 1982 War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986) (hereinafter "R. Khalidi"), pp. 17-41.

move about freely only because the Lebanese government was powerless to control them.

The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), on the other hand, provided a friendly environment for the Palestinian organizations, as well as radical groups from other countries, quite willingly. Soon after its formation in late 1967 the PDRY government declared that "the correct way to liberate Palestine is to support the popular armed resistance movement in it and consequently deems it necessary to give monetary and moral support to the popular armed resistance movement in Palestine. This is a necessary and fundamental matter."⁴³² This is hardly surprising since PDRY was established by the Adeni branch of the ANM, most of whose central leadership would later found the PFLP and other radical Palestinian organizations. South Yemeni territory would serve as a base and safe-haven for radical Palestinian and Arab movements such as the PFLP and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO).⁴³³

⁴³² Lajnah al-Tandhimiyyah li al-Jabhah al-Qawmiyyah [National Front Administrative Committee, Kaifa nafhamu Tajribah al-Yaman al-Janubiyyah al-Sha'biyyah? [How Should we understand the Experience of Popular South Yemen?] (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'ah wa al-Nashir, 1969) (hereinafter "Kaifa nafhamu?"), p. 240.

⁴³³ "Mandub al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir al-Khalij yaqulu: Al-Nidham al-Sa'udiyyah yal'abu Dawr al-Daraki al-Siyasi fi al-Khalij al-'Arabi. Kull Dharbah nusaddiduha li al-Ihtikarat al-Naftiyyah hiya Dharbah li Isra'il [The Representative of the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Gulf states: The Saudi Regime plays the Role of Political Policeman in the Arab Gulf. Every Blow that we direct Against the Oil Monopolies is a Blow against Israel], Al-Hadaf, No. 43, May 23, 1970, pp. 8-9.

B. Tolerant Environments

Other Arab governments upon whom organizations like the PFLP relied for support, such as Syria and Jordan, did not similarly welcome them with open arms, and so the environments in which the PFLP operated in these countries might be classified as 'restrictive'. Although the Syrian government permitted the PFLP to maintain bases and institutions on its territory, the organization exercised strict control over its members' actions.⁴³⁴ This was especially true during the 1990 Persian Gulf crisis, during which Syria participated in the US-led

⁴³⁴ During the 1970's, for example, Syria permitted four Palestinian organizations - Al-Fatah, Al-Sa'iqah, the PFLP, and the PLA - to operate officially on its territory. According to El-Rayyes and Nahas:

[a]ll were required to maintain a representative at the defence ministry to co-ordinate activities with the national defence authorities, and no commandos were permitted to enter the occupied territories [Israel] from Syria without the ministry's written approval. While in Syria, the guerrillas were prohibited from carrying arms when moving through the country or wearing uniforms except when carrying out official instructions from the intelligence department. Similarly, there were restrictions on the location of training camps and shooting ranges, the use of special identity papers, detention or questioning of suspects, unauthorized statements and marches or ceremonies.

R. El-Rayyes and D. Nahas, Guerrillas for Palestine (London: Portico Publications, 1976) (hereinafter "El-Rayyes and Nahas"), p. 114.

These restrictions continued well into the 1980's. During this period, the Syrian government allowed no cross-border operations into Israel from its territory, but did permit them - under its strict supervision - to be carried out by way of Jordan. See U.S. Department of State, Telegram from U.S. Embassy, Amman to Secretary of State, Washington, D.C., "New Israeli Line on Palestinian Terrorists in Jordan and Possible Implications for the Peace Process," (101359Z Nov 84).

coalition against Iraq, yet allowed the PFLP to maintain its headquarters in Damascus - albeit on a tight leash - despite the latter's open and enthusiastic support for Saddam Hussein.⁴³⁵

The Jordanian government, until September 1970, permitted the Palestinian organizations to operate from and maintain bases on its territory, while demanding that the Palestinian groups respect Jordanian sovereignty.⁴³⁶ The Palestinian groups, however, intent on operating against Israel independent of the control of Arab governments - which they blamed for having failed the Palestinian cause in June 1967 - routinely disregarded their host's authority, as they would later do in Lebanon.

The guerrillas armed civilians; they disregarded Jordanian laws; they excluded themselves from Jordanian financial obligations and taxes; they established their own courts whose venue they insisted upon for trials of guerrillas accused of various crimes; they patrolled the streets and parts of the city outside their areas; they rejected the registration of their vehicles; they incited demonstrations and riots; they attacked government buildings; they abducted Jordanians and foreigners alike; they intimidated journalists.⁴³⁷

In September 1970, the Jordanian government - prompted by the PFLP's hijacking of four passenger airliners to a deserted airfield within its territory, where it subsequently blew them up - reestablished its authority by driving out the Palestinian

⁴³⁵ "Iraq: PFLP Reopens Baghdad Office," Middle East Economic Digest, January 11, 1991, p. 12.

⁴³⁶ R. D. McLaurin, "The PLO and the Arab Fertile Crescent," in A. Norton and M. Greenberg, ed., International Relations of the Palestine Liberation Organization (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989) (hereinafter "McLaurin"), p. 25.

⁴³⁷ McLaurin, p. 26. See also El-Rayyes and Nahas, p. 85.

organizations by force. Jordan, as a result, became a hostile environment for groups such as the PFLP, whose remaining activists were forced to operate covertly.⁴³⁸

The examples of Lebanon, South Yemen, Syria, and Jordan clearly illustrate the three different types of environments in which the PFLP has operated during its existence. In all cases, except for South Yemen's, the PFLP believed that it was dealing with host governments whose interests were antithetical to its own⁴³⁹ - namely Lebanon⁴⁴⁰ and Jordan,⁴⁴¹ which were openly pro-western or Syria, which seemed to be exploiting the

⁴³⁸ See generally Munadhdhamah al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah fi al-Urdunn [Popular Front Organization in Jordan], Al-Barnamij wa al-Muhimmat [Programs and Tasks] (No place of publication: No publisher, 1986) (hereinafter "Programs and Tasks").

⁴³⁹ 4th Congress, p. 242.

⁴⁴⁰ See, e.g. B. Abu Sharif, "Al-'Amaliyyat al-Suriyyah istanadat ila Taqdir Daqiq li al-Mawqif: Hal yakunu al-Janub Hadaif al-'Amaliyyat al-Muqbilah? [Syrian Operations were Based on a Precise Definition of its Position: Will the South be a Target for Future Operations?]," Al-Hadaif, No. 539, May 23, 1981, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁴¹ The PFLP believes that because the Jordanian government always considered the establishment of an independent Palestinian state to be an act which would call into question its own legitimacy (including its sovereignty over the West Bank), it has adopted a policy of arresting and expelling Palestinian nationalists and supporting Palestinian leaders willing to accept Jordanian sovereignty. See Programs and Tasks, pp. 30-31; Munadhdhamah al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah fi al-Urdunn, Al-Tagrir al-Siyasi [Political Report] (No place of publication: No publisher, 1986) (hereinafter "Political Report"), p. 14; "Fi Bayan sadr 'an al-Maktab al-Siyasi li al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah: Hukm li al-Sha'b sayunaffidhu mahma kanat Ijra'at al-Himayah al-Sahyuniyyah wa al-'Urdunniyyah [In a Statement issued by the Popular Front's Politburo: The People's Sentence is Carried Out Despite the Zionist and Jordanian Security Measures]," Al-Hadaif, No. 808, March 10, 1986, p. 6.

Palestinian issue in order to advance its own regional interests.⁴⁴²

The anxiety of the Palestinian groups, including the PFLP, over the possibility that the Lebanese, Syrian, and Jordanian⁴⁴³ governments would attempt to limit cross-border military operations against Israel led them to attempt to test their hosts' resolve and ability to restrict their actions. The Lebanese government failed this test and allowed the Palestinian organizations to carve out an autonomous enclave in southern Lebanon, eventually losing all control over them.

In contrast, the Syrian government clarified how it expected the Palestinian organizations to behave from the start. It formulated rules which governed the relationship between host and guest and strictly enforced them. As a result, Syria was able to maintain its sovereignty and the Palestinian organizations found a safe haven and a base from which they were able to carry out

⁴⁴² See, e.g. "Sarkis: Ana listu Dighul [Sarkis: I am not De Gaulle]," Al-Hadaf, No. 370, September 25, 1976, pp. 10-11.

⁴⁴³ R. El-Rayyes and D. Nahas maintain that the conflict between the Hashemite government and the Palestinian organizations was in full force even in late 1967, when King Hussein claimed that ". . . commando activity . . . could only assist the enemy, and announced that it was his duty to resist the commandos with all his power." While Fatah realized the importance of maintaining correct relations with the authorities for the sake of a continued armed presence on Jordanian territory, ". . . the PFLP and PDFLP brooked no dealings with the Hashemite regime whose reactionary nature they saw as an obstacle planted directly across the path of Arab and Palestinian liberation." See El-Rayyes and Nahas, pp. 85-86. See also McLaurin, p. 24.

(with Syrian approval) both cross-border and international armed operations against Israel and the West.

Jordan's King Hussein, responding to the groundswell of support for Palestinian armed activity among his subjects, particularly in the wake of the Battle of al-Karamah in 1968,⁴⁴⁴ allowed the Palestinian organizations to set up bases on his territory. Cooperation between the Palestinian organizations and the Jordanian forces increased to the point where the government permitted Iraqi troops to enter the country in order to provide covering fire for the Palestinian positions. According to McLaurin, after Israel began to attack Palestinian concentrations in the countryside, the organizations moved their positions to the cities, where, for the first time, ". . . the guerrillas were present in large numbers . . . lighting a fuse leading to an inevitable explosion."⁴⁴⁵

The large concentration of armed Palestinians in urban areas forced King Hussein to find a way to coexist with them.

King Hussein evolved a modus vivendi with the guerrilla leadership that was posited on (1) Jordanian assistance to the guerrillas in movement and supply and (2) permission to operate in Jordan in return for (3) guerrilla rejection of Arab government control, (4) abnegation of any involvement in internal affairs, (5) control of the refugee camps, (6) pledges not to attack Israel from Jordan, (7) guarantees to avoid specific Israeli targets, (8) promises not to arm the civilian population, and (9) assurances that armed and uniformed guerrillas would be kept out of the cities.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁴ McLaurin, p. 24.

⁴⁴⁵ McLaurin, p. 25.

⁴⁴⁶ Id., p. 25.

The Palestinian organizations violated all of these conditions (see above) and, by September 1970, mortally threatened the Jordanian government's sovereignty. Almost before it was too late, the government forces took firm action to drive the Palestinian organizations from Jordanian territory, completing the process by April of the following year.⁴⁴⁷

The PFLP's activities in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon focused on cross-border strikes against Israel because these states share frontiers with that country. South Yemen's role as a supporter of militant radical movements allowed the PFLP and its allies to use its territory as a safe-haven and operational base for regional and international attacks. PDRY's location afforded local militant groups easy access to Western targets in the Persian Gulf, yet shielded them, for the most part, from retaliation due to the country's status (as of February 1968) as a close Soviet ally.⁴⁴⁸

The friendliness of the PFLP's operating environments in these countries depended upon the degree of trust which existed between the PFLP and the host government. In Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon, there was almost no trust between the two sides and the host governments took steps to restrict the PFLP's freedom of action. They sought, in theory, to control the Palestinian organization's operations against Israel - allowing them to take

⁴⁴⁷ El-Rayyes and Nahas., p. 87.

⁴⁴⁸ R. Nyrop, The Yemens, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1986) (hereinafter "The Yemens"), pp. 316-317.

place when this served their interests and halting them when they did not. The PFLP's freedom of action depended, to a large extent, upon the degree to which it was able to either circumvent the host government's restrictions or undermine its authority. The environments in which the PFLP operated in Arab countries bordering Israel, then, were at best restrictive and at worst, hostile. The exceptional freedom of action which it enjoyed in Lebanon was obtained by force and not by consent.

In contrast, the relationship between the PFLP and South Yemen's NLF-led government was truly friendly, having been established in the late 1950's and early 1960's, when Habash led the ANM and the NLF was its branch in Aden. Both organizations sought to rid the Persian Gulf region of the western presence and, at least from the late 1960's until the early 1980's, South Yemen had no goals which might override the interests it had in common with the PFLP.

Not a country which generated great wealth, or in which one could earn a great deal of money, South Yemen served as a base for operations by militant radical organizations against regional western interests. In the sphere of the Arab-Israeli conflict, however, it was considered a friendly peripheral state (one which did not share a border with Israel), similar to Algeria or Libya. Although these countries have also provided the PFLP with financial and material aid, as well as training facilities,⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁹ See H. D. Nelson, ed., Algeria: A Country Study (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 1985), pp. 298-
(continued...)

they have not been able to duplicate the close relationship - forged during the NLF's bid for power - which existed between South Yemen and the PFLP through the early 1980's.

C. Hostile Environments

In the pro-western Arab countries and in the western countries themselves, the PFLP operated in a particularly hostile environment since it had officially designated these countries its enemies. Many Palestinians living in pro-western Arab nations such as Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, and in western countries such as the United States, had prospered in the professions and in business and were willing financial sources for the PFLP's operations. In such circumstances, the PFLP operated covertly through front organizations, well aware of its pariah status.⁴⁵⁰ In an extreme case, local leftists in Denmark, operating on the PFLP's behalf, carried out bank robberies and purchased lethal firearms and explosives, including shoulder-fired missiles, which were intended for the organization's use.⁴⁵¹

D. Targeting

Since its establishment, the PFLP's armed operations have tended to fall into three basic categories: international

⁴⁴⁹ (...continued)

299; H.C. Metz, Libya: A Country Study (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 1989), p. 282.

⁴⁵⁰ See, e.g. R. Soble, "Palestinian Unit Seeking Help in U.S., FBI Says," Los Angeles Times, March 23, 1987, p. 1.

⁴⁵¹ "Seven Jailed in Denmark's 'Trial of the Century,'" Reuters, May 2, 1991.

attacks, regional attacks, and attacks carried out against Israeli and Palestinian targets in Israel and the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights.⁴⁵² They have also tended to reflect the three spheres into which the PFLP's enemies have fallen ideologically. The organization's international, and many of its regional operations have been directed against Israel's supporters ('imperialism' and 'World Zionism'), as well as Israeli facilities abroad. Its regional operations have been directed primarily against 'imperialist' facilities in the Middle East and against 'Arab reactionary' targets. The PFLP's operations in Israel and the territories have been aimed at all sectors of Israeli society and government and at those Palestinians who cooperate with them.

The PFLP's international targets⁴⁵³ included individuals, airliners (both mid-air hijackings and ground attacks), as well as transportation, governmental, commercial, and diplomatic facilities. Its regional targets (located mainly in the pro-Western Arab countries) included government installations, foreign diplomatic and commercial facilities, and competing organizations - both Palestinian and non-Palestinian. The PFLP's attacks in Israel and the territories are carried out against targets in both the Israel and Palestinian sectors. Targets in the Israeli sector include individuals, industrial and

⁴⁵² Referred to collectively, hereinafter, as "the territories."

⁴⁵³ For this study's purposes, these denote targets located outside Israel and the Arab World.

commercial enterprises, transport facilities, infrastructure, the Israeli military, and places of leisure (such as movie theaters, public parks, and eating establishments). Its targets in the Palestinian sector are mainly individuals accused of collaborating with the Israeli authorities, but may also include members of rival Palestinian factions.

The PFLP's targets vary in category and type according to the nature of its operating environment, as well as the international and regional political conditions with which it must contend. Its attacks can be divided among those claimed by the PFLP and confirmed by the mass media, unconfirmed attacks claimed by the PFLP, and attacks reportedly carried out by the PFLP, but for which it never claimed responsibility.

The PFLP has carried out armed operations against Israeli and Palestinian targets in Israel and the territories since its founding in late 1967. It carried out operations against domestic and foreign targets in the Arab countries through 1976, although skirmishes with rival local and Palestinian organizations continue to the present. The PFLP's attacks on international targets in general ended in 1981 and its aircraft hijackings ended in 1970.⁴⁵⁴

E. International Operations

The PFLP's international operations against civilian aircraft began in 1968 with its July hijacking of an Israeli

⁴⁵⁴ Although it officially renounced hijacking as a tactic in 1971 (See below).

airliner to Algiers.⁴⁵⁵ They were quickly followed by further hijackings and by ground attacks on the aircraft of various western nations.⁴⁵⁶ The confirmed hijackings claimed by the

⁴⁵⁵ PFLP, Bayan Raqm 37 hawla al-Istila' 'ala Ta'irah Isra'iliyyah Bu'inj 707 [Statement Number 37 on the Takeover of an Israeli Boeing 707 Aircraft], Version I, (Leaflet). See also PFLP, Bayan 'Amaliyyat Raqm 37 hawla Khatf Ta'irah 'al-'Al' al-Khutut al-Jawiyyah al-Isra'iliyyah [Operations Statement No. 37 on the Hijacking of the El Al Israel Airlines Airliner], Version II, (Leaflet).

⁴⁵⁶ These are attacks for which the PFLP claimed responsibility and which were reported in the mass media. See, e.g. the December 1968 machine-gun and grenade attack on an El Al airliner as it prepared to depart Athens, Greece (PFLP, Bayan 'Amaliyyat Raqm 77 hawla 'Amaliyyah al-Hujum 'ala al-Ta'irah al-'Al al-Isra'iliyyah [Operations Statement Number 77 on the Attack Operations on the Israeli El Al Aircraft], (Leaflet); J. Sibley, "Few Terrorists are Punished for Hijackings and Killings," New York Times, December 20, 1973, p. 16); the February 1969 ground attack on an El Al Airliner preparing to depart Zurich, Switzerland (PFLP, Bayan 'Amaliyyat Raqm 91 hawla Muhajamah wa Tahtim Ta'irah Bu'inj fi Matar Zurich [Operations Statement Number 91 on the Attack on and Destruction of the Boeing Aircraft at Zurich Airport], (Leaflet); New York Times, December 20, 1973, p. 16); the August 1969 hijacking of a TWA airliner from Rome to Damascus, where the perpetrators blew it up (PFLP, Bayan 'Amaliyyat Raqm 210 hawla al-Istila' 'ala al-Ta'irah al-Amairikiyyah wa Tadmiriha [Operations Statement 210 on the Takeover of the American Aircraft, and its Destruction], (Leaflet); New York Times, December 20, 1973, p. 16); the attempted boarding of a TWA aircraft in Athens, in December 1969, by three Lebanese PFLP members ("Ma' al-Ta'irat wa Nusur al-Thawrah [With the Aircraft and the Eagles of the Revolution]," Al-Hadaf, No. 59, September 12, 1970, pp. 4-5; New York Times, December 20, 1973, p. 16); the simultaneous hijacking of four civilian aircraft and the diversion of three of them (TWA, Swissair, and BOAC) to Dawson's Field in al-Zarqa', Jordan. The attempt on the fourth aircraft, an El Al airliner, was foiled by the Israeli skymarshalls on board. (Al-Hadaf, No. 59, September 12, 1970, pp. 4-5; E. Mickolus, Transnational Terrorism: A Chronology of Events, 1968-1979 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980) (hereinafter "Mickolus"), pp. 214-215); the January 1975 missile attack, aimed at an El Al aircraft at Orly Airport in Paris, but which hit a Yugoslav airliner instead ("Al-'Amaliyyat alati sahama al-Rafiq Mishail Mukarbil fi Tanfidhiha [The Operations in whose Execution Michel Mukarbil

(continued...)

PFLP ended in 1970, following the organization's expulsion from its bases in Jordan in September of that year. Nearly two months later, the PFLP abandoned aircraft hijacking as an operational tactic.⁴⁵⁷ Its last attack on a civilian aircraft from the ground occurred in Nairobi in January 1976 (See footnote 442, supra). This coincided with the shift by the Palestinian factions to full involvement in the Lebanese civil war and the consequent diversion of a significant portion of their resources for that purpose.⁴⁵⁸

As its operations statements confirmed, the PFLP's attacks on Israeli and Western civilian aircraft were meant to demonstrate Israel's dependence on the West for military and economic support and to emphasize the need to break the strong link between them. The PFLP, for example, viewed El Al as a military target and its operations against the airline were meant to highlight the ways

. . . in which this company differs from other civilian transport companies, and places itself, its aircraft, and its pilots within the framework of a strategic reserve for the Israeli air force. El Al's other activities, in this vein, involve special secret

⁴⁵⁶ (...continued)

Participated], " Al-Hadaf, No. 312, July 19, 1975, pp. 6-7; Mickolus, pp. 501-502); the January 1976 attempt to down an El Al aircraft with a SAM-7 missile as it took off from Nairobi, Kenya (" Al-Hadaf ma' al-Abtal al-Muharrarin: al-Mu'taqilun hawwalu Dhallam al-Asr ila Nidhal Mushriq [Al-Hadaf with the Liberated Heroes: The Detainees Transformed the Gloom of Imprisonment into a Shining Struggle], " Al-Hadaf, No. 772, June 3, 1985, pp. 35-41; Associated Press, January 13, 1978).

⁴⁵⁷ Al-Hadaf, No. 143, March 18, 1972.

⁴⁵⁸ See Cobban, p. 77.

flights, under the auspices of the Israeli Defense Ministry, during which it has transported pilots training to fly Phantom combat aircraft in preparation for surprise attacks and new aggression against the Arab states.⁴⁵⁹

The PFLP's operations against American and European carriers were intended to draw attention to the close relationship between Israel and its Western allies and to rally public opinion in those countries against the continuation of that relationship. Following the September 1970 hijackings, the PFLP stated that these operations were aimed at putting ". . . the general world view on the right track toward an understanding of the problem of the Palestinian people."⁴⁶⁰ The PFLP's attacks on ground targets in Western Europe were similarly aimed at underscoring Israel's presence there,⁴⁶¹ but also its strong relationship with European governments⁴⁶² and local Zionist elements.⁴⁶³

The PFLP's international operations were aimed primarily at placing the Palestinian cause at the top of the world agenda and highlighting Israel's relationship with the West. With few

⁴⁵⁹ PFLP, Operations Statement No. 77, op.cit..

⁴⁶⁰ Al-Hadaf, No. 59, September 12, 1970, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁶¹ See, e.g. the PFLP's attack on the Israeli ZIM shipping line's London office on August 25, 1969 (Al-Hadaf, No. 59, September 12, 1970, pp. 4-5).

⁴⁶² See, e.g. the PFLP's grenade attack on the Israeli Embassy in Bonn, West Germany on September 8, 1969 (Id.).

⁴⁶³ See, e.g. the PFLP's assassination attempt on British Zionist leader Edward Sieff in London on December 30, 1973 ("Man Huwa Juzif Sif aladhi atlaqa 'alaihi al-Nar Ahad Fida'iyu al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah? [Who is Joseph Sieff, who was shot at by One of the Popular Front's Fighters?], " Al-Hadaf, No. 234, January 5, 1974, p. 14).

exceptions, these operations were not aimed at causing extensive material damage,⁴⁶⁴ but rather at forcing global public opinion to pay greater attention to the Palestinian viewpoint.

F. Regional Attacks

In the Arab World, where public opinion had long been sensitized to the Palestinian viewpoint, the PFLP's operations were aimed at demonstrating the alleged harm that the link between the West and some Arab governments was inflicting on the Palestinian cause.⁴⁶⁵ By attacking Western targets in the Middle East, the PFLP hoped to reveal the scope of the foreign presence in the region and rally the populace to rise up and expel it, thereby depriving the Israeli enemy of one of its pillars of support. Whether or not the PFLP's attacks successfully conveyed this message to the rank and file in the region is uncertain. Telegrams purportedly sent by local underground leftist organizations to the PFLP indicate their

⁴⁶⁴ The exceptions were the joint PFLP-Black September attack on the Trans-Alpine oil terminal in Trieste, Italy on August 5, 1972, which destroyed six out of twenty-five storage tanks (Mickolus, p. 335) and the January 1974 joint PFLP-Japanese Red Army attempt to blow up the Shell Oil refinery in Singapore ("Al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir Filastin wa al-Jaish al-Ahmar al-Yabani yaqumuna bi 'Amaliyyat Dharb Masafi al-Naft fi Jazirah 'Bakan' bi Singhafurah [the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Japanese Red Army Carry Out an Operation to Strike at the Oil Refinery on 'Bakan[?]' [Palau Bokum] Island in Singapore]," Al-Hadaf, No. 239, February 9, 1974, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁶⁵ A link which the PFLP described in its publications in great detail. See, e.g. "Kull Shai' 'an Qisf 'Kural Si': Asabat al-Sawarikh Thalathah Ahdaf fi Lahdhah Wahidah [Everything on the Shelling of the 'Coral Sea': The Missiles Hit Three Targets at Once]," Al-Hadaf, No. 105, June 19, 1971, pp. 3-7.

agreement with the latter's assessment.⁴⁶⁶ However, these same organizations had long been engaged in attempting to overthrow the governments in their respective countries. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO)⁴⁶⁷ had been waging an armed rebellion against that country's sultanate since its founding in 1965.⁴⁶⁸ While the PFLO's armed activity had all but ceased by 1979 - due to the Omani government's successful counterinsurgency campaign - the organization's political structure remained.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁶ See, e.g. "Al-Hizb al-Shuyu'i fi al-Su'udiyyah: Hizbuna yunadhilu bi Thabbah dhidda al-Tawajud al-Amairki wa al-Atlasasi fi al-Khalij [The Communist Party in Saudi Arabia: Our Party Struggles Resolutely Against the American and NATO Presence in the Gulf]," Al-Hadaf, No. 894, January 4, 1988, p. 61; "Al-Hadaf tuhawiru al-Rafiq 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qadhi al-Amin al-'Am li al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir 'Uman: Qabus yaftahu al-Abwab amama al-Tawajud al-'Askari al-Atlasasi wa yas'i li Tamyi' al-Harakah al-Siyasiyyah al-Jamahiriyah [Al-Hadaf talks to 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Qadhi, Secretary General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman: Qabus Opens the Doors to the NATO Presence and seeks to Weaken the Political Mass movement]," Al-Hadaf, No. 853, February 23, 1987, pp. 32-37; "Al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah fi al-Bahrain: Lan taflahu Juhud al-A'da' fi Iqtala' al-Thawrah al-Filastiniyyah [The Popular Front in Bahrain: The Enemy's Efforts to Uproot the Palestinian Revolution will not Succeed]," Al-Hadaf, No. 846, December 29, 1986, p. 9.

⁴⁶⁷ The PFLO, in July 1992, changed its name to the Omani Democratic Popular Front (al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah al-Dimuqratiyyah al-'Umaniyyah), although its aims remain the same. See "Al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir 'Uman ta'qidu Mu'tamaraha al-Watani al-'Am al-Rabi' [The Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman holds its Fourth National Congress]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1106, July 5, 1992, p. 28.

⁴⁶⁸ "13 'Aman 'ala al-Thawrah al-'Umaniyyah: Na'milu min ajli I'adah Bana' Anfusina wa Muwasalah al-Harb al-Thawriyyah [13 Years Since [the Beginning of] the Omani Revolution: We will Work to Rebuild Ourselves and to Conduct the Revolutionary War]," Al-Hadaf, No. 389, June 3, 1978, p. 25.

⁴⁶⁹ "Al-Thawrah al-'Umaniyyah: Afaq Wasi'ah li Nuhudh Jadid [The Omani Revolution: Wide Horizons for a New Revival]," Al-Hadaf, No. 443, June 23, 1979, pp. 34-35.

Outside Oman, the Popular Front in Bahrain (PFB) and the Bahraini National Liberation Front (BNLF) engaged in underground trade union and political activity in that country - activity which was successfully suppressed by the government.⁴⁷⁰ With opposition political and military activity hobbled in the Persian Gulf states, there was no one to take up the Habash's call for general rebellion against the local pro-western Arab governments during the 1990-91 crisis. Consequently, this aspect of the PFLP's strategy remains another of its unrealized goals.⁴⁷¹

The PFLP's regional operations in the late 1960's and early 1970's, however, seemed appropriate in light of the perceived danger which the West and its Middle Eastern allies posed to the Palestinian cause. The targets of these operations were almost always commercial. The most spectacular attacks were aimed at exposing a purported conspiracy among Israel, the conservative Arab governments and American and European oil companies to supply the Western world with petroleum, in which Israel allowed its territory to be used by the oil consortia to build pipelines for trans-shipping petroleum overland to the Mediterranean Sea.

On May 31, 1969, PFLP operatives set off an explosive charge in the Banyas River, at a point twelve miles north of al-

⁴⁷⁰ "Nadhrah Thaniyah 'ala al-Intikhabat fi al-Bahrain [A Second Look at the Elections in Bahrain]," Al-Hadaf, No. 183, December 23, 1972, p. 8; U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1981), p. 945.

⁴⁷¹ "Palestinian Leader Urges Strikes at Western, Israeli Interests," Reuters, September 3, 1990.

Qunaitrah, heavily damaging a section of the Trans-Arabian Pipeline, which was owned by the Arab-American Oil Company (ARAMCO). Damage from the explosion blocked the flow of oil through the one-thousand mile long pipeline, which began in Dharan, Saudi Arabia and terminated at the Mediterranean port of Sidon in Lebanon. The pipeline provided ". . . millions of dollars in royalties and transit fees to Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon . . . ,"⁴⁷² all of whose governments were hostile to the PFLP at the time.

⁴⁷² Mickolus, pp. 121-122. See also Beirut RNS in Arabic, 2300 gmt, June 25, 1969 in FBIS Daily Report: Middle East and Africa, Vol. V, No. 123, June 26, 1969, p. A1.

The PFLP communique, which appeared both in leaflet form in 1969 and as an article in Al-Hadaf in 1978,⁴⁷³ made the following points:

1) By targeting a pipeline owned by a consortium of American companies (ARAMCO), the PFLP was indirectly striking at the United States government itself, which it accused of 'leading world imperialism', providing ". . . the Israeli enemy with material, political, and moral support," and allying itself with the pro-western Arab states in the region.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷³ PFLP, Bayan Raqm 129 hawla Nisf Khatt al-Anabib al-Batrul (al-Tablain) fi al-Jawlan [Statement No. 129 on the Blowing Up of the Petroleum Pipeline (Tapline) in the Golan], May 31, 1969. See also "Al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir Filastin Bayan Raqm 129 hawla Nisf Khatt Anabib al-Batrul (al-Tablain) fi al-Jawlan [Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine Statement Number 129 on the Blowing Up of the Petroleum Pipeline (Tapline) in the Golan], " Al-Hadaf, No. 386, May 13, 1978, pp. 14-15. See also Beirut RNS in Arabic, 1755 gmt, June 25, 1969 in FBIS Daily Report: Middle East and Africa, June 26, 1969, Vol. V, No. 123, p. A1; Tripoli Libyan News Agency in Arabic, 1030 gmt, June 7, 1969 in FBIS Daily Report: Middle East and Africa, Vol. V, No. 111, June 10, 1969, pp. A1; Beirut RNS in Arabic, 1630 gmt, June 6, 1969 in FBIS Daily Report: Middle East and Africa, Vol. V, No. 110, June 9, 1969, p. A2; Damascus MENA in Arabic to MENA Cairo, 1929 gmt, June 3, 1969 in FBIS Daily Report: Middle East and Africa, Vol. V, No. 108, June 5, 1969, p. A1; Damascus MENA in Arabic to MENA Cairo, 0905 gmt, June 1, 1969 in FBIS Daily Report: Middle East and Africa, Vol. V, No. 107, June 4, 1969, p. D1; Cairo MENA in Arabic, 0630 gmt, June 1, 1969 in FBIS Daily Report: Middle East and Africa, Vol. V, No. 106, June 3, 1969, p. G4; Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic, 1100 gmt, May 31, 1969 in FBIS Daily Report: Middle East and Africa, Vol. V, No. 105, June 2, 1969, p. A1.

⁴⁷⁴ Palestine Liberation Organization, "Al-Sabt 31 Ayar (Mayu) 1969 [Saturday, May 31, 1969], " Al-Yawmiyyat al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Diaries: 7/1/70 - 12/31/70], Vol. 12 (Beirut: Markaz al-Abhath [Research Center], 1971), pp. 402-403.

2) By attacking the Tapline, the PFLP sought to call attention to its allegation that Israel was permitting the passage through its territory of petroleum originating in the pro-western oil-producing Arab states. It also sought to highlight the benefits that it believed Israel was deriving from this arrangement.⁴⁷⁵

3) The PFLP attack constituted a warning to the pro-western Arab nations against further complicity or participation in this arrangement with Israel. Far from being intimidated, Saudi Arabia, as well as Lebanon and Egypt, sharply criticized the PFLP for its action.⁴⁷⁶

The PFLP also attempted to underscore Israel's direct commercial links with the pro-Western Persian Gulf states by attacking that country's maritime vessels. The PFLP claimed

⁴⁷⁵ Palestine Liberation Organization, Al-Yawmiyyat al-Filastiniyyah: 7/1/69 - 12/31/69 [The Palestinian Diaries: 7/1/69 - 12/31/69, Vol. 10 (Beirut: PLO Research Center, 1970?), p. 218; "Al-Naft al-Sa'udi yatadaffiqu 'abra Isra'il [Saudi Oil is being pumped through Israel]," Al-Hadaf, No. 50, July 7, 1970, pp. 8-9.

⁴⁷⁶ Mickolus, p. 122. See also Beirut RNS in Arabic, 1050 gmt, June 27, 1969 in FBIS Daily Report: Middle East and Africa, Vol. V, No. 126, July 1, 1969, p. B2; Beirut RNS in Arabic, 1045 gmt, June 25, 1969 in FBIS Daily Report: Middle East and Africa, Vol. V., No. 123, June 26, 1969, pp. B1-B2; Beirut RNS in Arabic, 1735 gmt, June 9, 1969 in FBIS Daily Report: Middle East and Africa, Vol. V, No. 111, June 10, 1969; Beirut RNS in Arabic, 1855 gmt, June 3, 1969 in FBIS Daily Report: Middle East and Africa, Vol. V, No. 107, June 4, 1969, p. B2; Palestine Liberation Organization, "Al-Ithnain 9 Haziran (Yunyu) 1969 [Monday, June 9, 1969]," Al-Yawmiyyat al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Diaries: 1/1/69-6/30/69], Vol. 9 (Beirut: Markaz al-Abhath [Research Center], 1970), pp. 438 and 475.

responsibility for having fired ". . . five missiles . . ." ⁴⁷⁷ from a speed boat at the Liberian-registered oil tanker, Coral Sea, which, on June 11, 1971, was transporting Iranian crude oil to the Israeli ". . . port of Eilat to be pumped to Ashqelon and from there, to be [transported] to Western Europe." ⁴⁷⁸ The missiles struck the tanker in two places and caused it to ignite, but inflicted no casualties.

This operation was aimed specifically at disrupting what the alleged collusion between Israel and the pro-western Persian Gulf states - specifically Saudi Arabia and Iran - which allowed these countries to pump their crude oil exports through Israel's pipeline, from Eilat to Ashdod, whence the petroleum would be transported to the Western European countries. ⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁷ Other sources claim that the PFLP fired bazooka shells instead of missiles. See, e.g. Mickolus, p. 267.

⁴⁷⁸ "Kullu Shai' 'an Qisf 'Kural Si': Asabat al-Sawarikh Thalathah Ahdaf fi Lahdhah Wahidah [Everything Concerning the Shelling of the 'Coral Sea': The Missiles Hit Three Targets at Once]," Al-Hadaf, No. 105, June 19, 1971, pp. 3-7. See also Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic, 0400 gmt, June 14, 1971 in FBIS Daily Report: Middle East & Africa, Vol. V, No. 114, June 14, 1971, p. G7.

⁴⁷⁹ "Al-Naft al-Sa'udi yatadaffiqu 'abra Isra'il! [Saudi Oil is Pumped through Israel!], Al-Hadaf, No. 50, July 11, 1970, pp. 8-9. See also "Al-Hilf al-Sirri baina al-Su'udiyyah wa Isra'il [The Secret Alliance Between Saudi Arabia and Israel]," Al-Hadaf, No. 24, January 10, 1970, pp. 6-7 and "Wathiqatan Sirriyyatan tafdhahan Haqiqah al-'Alaqat al-Iraniyyah - al-Isra'iliyyah alati tushrifu alaiha Washintan [Two Secret Documents Expose the Truth About Iranian-Israeli Ties which are Supervised by Washington]," Al-Hadaf, No. 31, February 28, 1970, pp. 8-9; Damascus MENA in Arabic to MENA Cairo, 0650 gmt, June 15, 1971; "Al-Ithnain 14 Haziran (Yunyu) 1971 [Monday, June 14, 1971]," Al-Yawmiyyat al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Diaries]: 1/1/71-6/30/71, Vol. 13 (Beirut: Markaz al-Abhath [Research Center], 1972), pp. 654-655; (continued...)

The PFLP claimed that its operatives set out from their 'headquarters' at the Jordanian port of 'Aqaba. It reported that the sea-borne unit

equipped itself with fuel, ammunition and provisions at contact points with which they worked, at most places along the Saudi coast, while the tanker "Coral Sea," which was [supposed] to begin its work later at the Eilat pipeline, left the Iranian loading port at Kharg Island in the direction of the Red Sea.

The unit encountered its target at the appointed location, at which time the tanker was compelled, because of the narrow passageway, to decrease its speed. The missiles scored direct hits and the unit left the area of operations without sustaining any losses.

The confrontation took place about 50 kilometers north of al-Barim Island off the coast of North Yemen.⁴⁸⁰

All of the PFLP's international and regional operations targeted governments, organizations, and commercial firms which it believed actively supported or acquiesced to Israel's existence. The PFLP sought to dissuade its target victims from

⁴⁷⁹ (...continued)

Id., pp. 660-661; Id., p. 676; Id., p. 703; Id., p. 739. During the 1991 Persian Gulf war, the PFLP reiterated its belief in the existence of a strategic alliance between Israel and Saudi Arabia with the claim that Israeli Construction and Housing Minister Ariel Sharon had travelled to Saudi Arabia to take part in the command of United States military operations there, although this was probably aimed at arousing anti-American sentiment among its supporters. "Al-Natiq al-Rasmi: Sharun fi al-Su'udiyyah li al-Ishraf 'ala 'Amaliyyat Quwwat al-Tahluf al-Amairki [The Official Spokesman: Sharon is in Saudi Arabia to Supervise the Operations of the American Alliance]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1039, January 27, 1991, p. 30.

⁴⁸⁰ Al-Hadaf, June 19, 1971, pp. 3-7, op. cit. See also Damascus MENA in Arabic to MENA Cairo, 0825 gmt, June 14, 1971; Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew, 1300 gmt, June 13, 1971 in FBIS Daily Report: Middle East & Africa, Vol. V, No. 114, June 14, 1971, p. H1.

continuing this support and to weaken their links with its primary enemy. All such operations had ceased by July 1981, when a PFLP unit bombed and shot at a travel agency, which the organization claimed was a cover for Israeli intelligence operations.⁴⁸¹ The following summer, Israeli forces invaded Lebanon, once again driving the PLO's constituent groups from their principal staging area.

While the PFLP was able to operate from Lebanon with no interference from the Lebanese authorities, the Syrian government severely limited its operational options - after establishing its headquarters in Damascus in 1982 - and thereafter, focused its armed attacks on targets located within Israeli-controlled territory. The operations were carried out either from across the border or from within Israel and the territories themselves, and were aimed either at Israelis or Palestinians whom the PFLP accused of collaborating with the Israeli government.

G. Operations on Israeli-Controlled Territory

The PFLP has been carrying out and claiming responsibility for operations in Israeli-controlled territory almost since its founding at the end of 1967⁴⁸² and is the only operational

⁴⁸¹ New York Times, August 11, 1981. See also "Al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah: 'Amaliyyah fi Athina dhidda Shabakah li al-Istikhbarat al-Isra'iliyyah [The Popular Front in Athens against an Israeli Intelligence Network]," Al-Safir, July 27, 1981; "Wara' al-'Aduw fi kull Makan: Al-Hujum 'ala Wagr li al-Musad fi Athina [At the Enemy's Rear Everywhere: The Attack on the Mossad Den in Athens]," Al-Hadaf, No. 549, August 8, 1981, pp. 14-15.

⁴⁸² PFLP, "Al-Rafiq al-Shahid al-Munadhil: Riyadh Amin Jabir," Sijil al-Khalidin: Al-Juz' al-Awwal 1964-1970 [Register (continued...)]

category in which it continues to engage at present. Its operations against Israeli targets have generally been intended to create a climate of fear in order to force the average Israeli to question his government's ability to protect him. According to an early PFLP strategic analysis:

. . . la resistance a frustre Israel en l'empechant de profiter au maximum de sa victoire pour assurer sa securite interieure, des frontieres sures et une vie civile exempte de pressions militaires, que ce soit par les depenses militaires ou par la mise en cause des programmes de developpement, etc. . . . La Resistance, par sa presence permanente, par les coups qu'elle porte a l'interieur, dans les territoires occupes en 48 et en 67, contre les objectifs economiques et civils, a reussi a supprimer ce sentiment de securite.⁴⁸³

Early statements speak of attacks ". . . spreading terror and panic within the Zionist ranks. They began to push and shove each other mindlessly, amid a wave of total chaos, in which a number were wounded as a result of the pushing and shoving, not to mention the direct injuries as a result of the shrapnel from the charges."⁴⁸⁴ Perhaps the most grim example of a successful PFLP attack in Jewish residential areas occurred on October 22,

⁴⁸² (...continued)

of the Immortals: Vol. I 1964-1970] (Beirut: Mu'assasah 'abd al-Hafidh al-Basat, undated), pp. 60-61.

⁴⁸³ PFLP, La Strategie Militaire du F.P.L.P. [The PFLP's Military Strategy] (Amman: Departement de L'Information, 1970), p. 10.

⁴⁸⁴ PFLP, Bayan 'Amaliyyat Raqm 143 hawla al-Infijarat qurb Ha'it al-Mabka (al-Burraq) fi al-Quds [Operations Statement No. 143 on the Explosions Near the Wailing Wall (al-Burraq) in Jerusalem], June 1969 (Leaflet). See also Mickolus, p. 123.

1969, when its operatives set off explosives in apartment buildings in Haifa.⁴⁸⁵

These operations were examples of attacks carried out by PFLP cells inside Israeli-controlled territory. During the 1970's, the PFLP also carried out cross-border raids and shellings against Israeli villages, mainly along the Lebanese frontier, for the similar purpose of sowing terror among the residents.⁴⁸⁶ The expulsion of the PFLP's leadership from Lebanon was followed by a lull of nearly two years as the organization worked to re-establish at least a military presence in the country. In 1984, the PFLP resumed its cross-border attacks, not only from Lebanon, but from Jordan as well.⁴⁸⁷ In the wake of its first such operation - a rocket attack on Kibbutz

⁴⁸⁵ PFLP, Bayan 'Amaliyyat Raqm 235 hawla Silsilah al-Infijarat fi Yawm al-Ra'b fi Haifa [Operations Statement No. 235 on the Series of Explosions on the Day of Terror in Haifa], October 23, 1969 (Leaflet). See also Mickolus, p. 143.

⁴⁸⁶ See, e.g. "Thuwwaruna al-Abtal yaqtahimuna Musta'mirah Hanita wa yuwaqi'una Khasa'ir Fadiah fi Sufuf al-'Aduw [Our Heroic Revolutionaries Storm the Hanita Settlement and Inflict Heavy Losses in the Enemy's Ranks]," Al-Hadaf, No. 317, August 23, 1975, pp. 4-5; "Hakadha Iqtahamu Musta'mirah Kfar Jil'adi: Abtal al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah min Majmu'ah al-Rafiq al-Shahid Abu Hassan nafadhu 'Amaliyyah Ham wa Hurrah li al-Mu'amarah wa Intiqaman li al-Shuhahda' [This is how Kfar Gil'adi was Stormed: Heroes of the Popular Front from the Comrade Martyr Abu Hassan Unit executed the Operation to Counter the Conspiracy and in Order to Avenge the Martyrs]," Al-Hadaf, No. 319, September 6, 1975, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁸⁷ During the 1980's and early 1990's, it was a common practice for Palestinian groups based in Syria to infiltrate into Jordan first before executing operations against Israeli targets. See, e.g. "Jordan Says it Killed Palestinian Guerrilla Infiltrators," Associated Press, July 22, 1990; "Arabs Slain in Border Clash came from Syria - Jordan Source," Reuters, March 11, 1991.

Ha'on, south of Tiberias - the PFLP claimed that ". . . [a] feeling of anxiety and terror [had] pervaded the ranks of the settlers."⁴⁸⁸ Succeeding cross-border operations followed a similar pattern.⁴⁸⁹

The mid-1980's were also marked by joint Israeli-Jordanian efforts to establish a Palestinian-Jordanian confederation on the West Bank. The PLO, in an effort to play at least an indirect role in the process, held discussions with the Jordanian government which eventually resulted in the signing - at the beginning of 1985 - of the so-called Amman Accord, which gave the PLO the right to participate (albeit indirectly) in negotiations

⁴⁸⁸ "Thuwwar al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah yuhajimuna Mustawtinah Hawun bi al-Sawarikh [Popular Front Revolutionaries Fire Missiles at the Ha'on Settlement]," Al-Hadaf, No. 718, April 9, 1984, p. 17.

⁴⁸⁹ See, e.g. "Riddan 'ala Tasa'ud al-Irhab al-Sahyuni: Thuwwar al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir Filastin yaqsufuna Musta'mirah Yardinah bi Sawarikh [In Response to the Escalation of Zionist Terror: Revolutionaries of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine Fire Rockets on the Yardenah Settlement]," Al-Hadaf, No. 746, November 12, 1984, p. 7; "Abtal al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah yuhajimuna Musta'mirah Sahyuniyyah: Ta'kid Jadid 'ala Tarabut al-Dakhil wa al-Kharij wa Wahdah al-Sha'b al-Filastiniyyah [Popular Front Heroes Attack a Zionist Settlement: A New Affirmation of the Close Connection Between the Interior and the Exterior [as well as] the Unity of the Palestinian People]," Al-Hadaf, No. 924, August 28, 1988, p. 22. Post-1991 cross-border operations, however, - coming during a period when a successful outcome to the Arab-Israeli peace process seems likely - have generally been aimed at undermining that process. One such attack occurred on October 9, 1993, when the PFLP attempted to land a Lebanon-based seaborne unit at Nahariyyah, on Israel's Mediterranean coast. See, e.g. "Al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir Filastin tan'i al-Shahid al-Batal: al-Mulazim 'Ahd Marwan al-Bana Batal 'Amaliyyah al-Quds al-Bahariyyah [The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine Mourns the Passing of the Heroic Martyr: Second Lieutenant 'Ahd Marwan al-Bana, Hero of the al-Quds Seaborne Operation]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1166, October 24, 1993, p. 12.

over the West Bank's fate and called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.⁴⁹⁰ In deference to Israel's aversion to negotiating directly with the PLO, 'Arafat was permitted to appoint only non-PLO Palestinians to the negotiating team.⁴⁹¹ Predictably, the PFLP, which was opposed to any sort of negotiation with Israel, reacted negatively to the agreement and in March, formed an alliance with other radical Palestinian factions (known as the Salvation Front) to combat it.⁴⁹² It also threatened to kill any participating Palestinians and in some cases, carried out those threats.⁴⁹³

H. Attacks on Fellow Palestinians

For most of its history, the PFLP has implemented a policy of targeting fellow Palestinians, whose views and actions are inconsistent with its program to recover all Israeli-held territory, for assassination. The motives for this policy range from the logical to the visceral, but all are consistent with the PFLP's belief that Palestinian differences with Israel can only be resolved through armed conflict.

An important element in the PFLP's strategy against Israel is the mobilization all rank-and-file Palestinians to take part

⁴⁹⁰ A. Gresh, The PLO - The Struggle Within: Towards an Independent Palestinian State (London: Zed Books, 1988) (hereinafter "Gresh"), pp. 239-240.

⁴⁹¹ Wallach & Wallach, pp. 320-321.

⁴⁹² Gresh, p. 240.

⁴⁹³ "Li Aladhina aghdhabahum I'dam Dhafr al-Masri [To Those Who Are Angered by Zafir al-Masri's Execution]," Al-Hadaf, No. 810, March 24, 1986, p. 26.

in this armed conflict, either by carrying weapons themselves or providing material or moral support to those who do. Such support may take the form of building social institutions which are independent of the Israeli administration (schools, hospitals, and marketing cooperatives, for example), participating in anti-Israel demonstrations, or providing food, shelter, and medical care for who engage in violent confrontation.

The PFLP divides Palestinians who are not part of this network into two categories: neutrals, who attempt to lead normal, non-political lives and collaborators, who either operate on Israel's behalf against the Palestinian resistance movement or attempt to work within the system to improve their economic and political conditions. Neutrals have not yet realized the importance of confronting Israel and need only to be educated. Collaborators, on the other hand, have consciously chosen to either work for Israel or reconcile themselves to its existence. The PFLP's policy for dealing with them initially, is to try to convince them of the error of their ways, and failing that, to kill them.

In addition to the doctrinal logic which PFLP leaders employ to justify the killing of their fellow Palestinians, there is the incredulity and rage which many of them feel toward their brethren who deal or cooperate with the enemy, whom they believe has done them an incalculable wrong. In his autobiography,

George Habash recalled the day that the Israeli army forced him and his fellow residents out of his hometown of Lod:

I was jolted by the sight of the Israeli officer and soldiers and the feeling took hold of me that if I had a pistol with me, I would empty its bullets into their heads. I found myself burning to fight them. Were it not for the fact that I did not have a weapon, I would have killed them without a word. I would have gone up to them and said: This is our land, you dogs. This is our country and not your country. We shall stay to fight you and you will never win the battle.⁴⁹⁴

Later that year, Habash and his fellow students at the American University of Beirut, formed the 'Urwah al-Wuthqa [the Indissoluble Bond] - the first of several successive organizations (of which the PFLP is the most recent) which he formed to fight Israel and those who aided in its establishment. Habash and his colleagues concluded that the Arabs might have won the 1948 war with Israel had it not been for certain of their leaders, who were either behaved incompetently or actively sought to make peace with the enemy. For this, they deserved to die. As Habash related:

During this period, our ideas were concentrated around those who had betrayed the cause and not around the state which had arisen at Palestine's expense. Our only concern was that we take revenge against those who had betrayed Palestine. Our conception at the time was based on the premise that as soon as the matter of the traitors was over, the Arab nation, through its masses, would be able to continue the battle.

The names of King 'Abdullah, Glubb Pasha, Shukri Al-Quwatli, King Faruq, Bisharah Al-Khuri and others had great meaning for us. We found these leaders guilty and we came to the conclusion that there was no other

⁴⁹⁴ Matar, pp. 19-20.

way to bring them down and take revenge on them without using weapons.⁴⁹⁵

Among the Palestinians whom the PFLP targets for assassination, those who inform on resistance members or operate against them on Israel's behalf are the ones to whose elimination the organization gives top priority. The PFLP is careful to emphasize in its publications that it follows an established procedure whenever it targets and kills a suspected collaborator. After investigating the suspect, PFLP operatives confront him with the evidence and extract a confession from him. In addition to treason, the operatives often accuse the suspect of such moral crimes as drug dealing, prostitution, and rape. They then offer him the opportunity to repent and mend his ways. Should this fail, the operatives kill him.

In June 1985, a PFLP member, recently freed from an Israeli prison, gave an interview to the organization's weekly magazine, Al-Hadaf, in which he described his role in killing a Palestinian suspected collaborating with Israeli intelligence:

This agent had been placed in the same cell that we were in and as we were getting to know him, he mentioned that his name was "Mazin." I knew then that he was the man that we were after. As soon as I took him to a corner and asked him a few questions, he realized that I was on to his treason and that the poisoning, rape, and sex which he had committed were known to us.

In any event, he began to talk and said that he had been interrogated by brothers from Fatah in Janin prison and had not confessed to a single thing. After this, he was asked by an intelligence officer not to confess anything having to do with the poisoning matter

⁴⁹⁵ Matar, pp. 24-25.

and only to admit that he was an agent, since he had been discovered. Afterwards, he was interrogated three times, with the help of another comrade, and we summarized the information which he had given to us.

Acceding to the request from the brothers in the Fatah movement, we decided to carry out the killing of this agent together, in which brother Bakr Khawarisah, who was serving a term, participated with me.

The night of 5/15/84, the anniversary of the partition, was set as the time to execute the operation, during which I jumped on the agent's chest and applied pressure with my hand onto his neck, while brother Bakr blocked off his mouth for half a minute until I asked him to raise his hand. I applied pressure to the agent's neck for another minute until he died. The operation ended successfully, quickly, and in complete silence, such that those present in the room were not aware of what had taken place.⁴⁹⁶

While some Palestinians, such as the suspected informant whose killing was just described, present an immediate operational threat to the PFLP, others threaten its long-term political aim of eliminating Israel altogether, because they reconcile themselves to Israel's existence and negotiate with the Jewish state to obtain what the PFLP considers ephemeral gains at best.

In June 1979, for example, the PFLP ". . . executed the death sentence . . ." on Hashim Al-Khaznadar, a Palestinian religious leader on the Gaza Strip, by stabbing him to death, for speaking out in favor of the Egyptian-Israeli peace negotiations and the plan for Palestinian autonomy which was being discussed

⁴⁹⁶ "Al-Hadaf ma' Abtal al-Muharrarin: Al-Mu'taqilun hawwalu Dhallam al-Asr ila Nidhal Mushriq [Al-Hadaf With the Liberated Heroes: The Detainees Transformed the Gloom of Imprisonment Into a Shining Struggle]," Al-Hadaf, No. 772, June 3, 1985, p. 36.

at the time.⁴⁹⁷ The PFLP also carries out such 'executions' against those whom it believes threaten its political control over the inhabitants of a given area. This was certainly true in the case of the Israeli-appointed Mayor of Nablus, Zafir al-Masri, who, in 1985 and 1986, was active in promoting a coalition between certain Palestinian leaders on the West Bank and the Jordanian government as a substitute for the Palestine Liberation Organization.⁴⁹⁸ The PFLP realized that the leadership of such a coalition would most likely settle for an arrangement which would fall short of an independent Palestinian state and Israel's elimination. The PFLP viewed al-Masri's appointment as a threat to its political program and feared that rank-and-file Palestinians might forego long-term nationalist goals for what it considered short-term economic gains, and that Israeli control over the West Bank, through puppet politicians, would be legitimated:

If such an appointment had been allowed to stand, other Israeli appointees might have taken their seats in

⁴⁹⁷ "Bayan sadr 'an al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir Filastin bi Dimashq hawla Tanfidh Hukm al-I'dam bi al-'Amil Al-Khaznadar [A Statement Issued by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in Damascus on the Execution of the Death Sentence on the Agent Al-Khaznadar]," Al-Hadaf, No. 441, June 9, 1979, p. 7.

⁴⁹⁸ Despite this, the PLO gave its tacit approval to Al-Masri's appointment. H. Kamm, "West Bank Mayor, Named by Israel, Killed by Gunman. Nablus Slaying Linked to Split Among Palestinians After Hussein-Arafat Break," New York Times, March 3, 1986, pp. A1 and A3. The PLO condemned Al-Masri's assassination, characterizing it as a crime "in the service of the agents of Israel." Y. Litani, et.al., "Jordan, Palestinians Condemn Murder; Masri Killing Major Blow to Devolution Proposals," Jerusalem Post, March 3, 1986.

other West Bank municipalities. 'Civil' administration might have become a reality, despite the continued presence of the Zionist occupation army. This would be conducive to direct Jordanian-Israeli negotiations, 'settling' the Palestinian question via an Israeli-Jordanian condominium on the West Bank For the Palestinian people as a whole, it spells no return to their home, no self-determination or other national rights, no independent state.⁴⁹⁹

After PFLP operatives gunned al-Masri down, in March 1986, the organization warned from Damascus that ". . . this sort of treason, by whomever it is perpetrated, will be met with direct and harsh punishment."⁵⁰⁰ Indeed, the PFLP intended al-Masri's killing to be a warning to others who might share his views and have similar aspirations. Soon after the killing, Al-Hadaf reported that ". . . it was not long after this operation before all of the candidates in the scheme of appointments to the municipal councils hurried to withdraw their candidacies . . .

"⁵⁰¹

The PFLP displayed similar intentions in a statement justifying a 'warning operation' against newspaper editor Hanna Sinyurah, after he announced his candidacy for the Jerusalem

⁴⁹⁹ "Execution of Zafer al Masri," Democratic Palestine, April 1986, p.5.

⁵⁰⁰ "Fi Bayan sadr 'an al-Maktab al-Siyasi li al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah: Hukm al-Sha'b sayunaffidhu Mahma kanat Ijra'at al-Himayat al-Sahyuniyyah wa al-'Urdunniyyah [In a Statement Issued by the Popular Front's Politburo: The People's Sentence is Carried Out Despite the Zionist and Jordanian Security Measures]," Al-Hadaf, No. 808, March 10, 1986, p. 6.

⁵⁰¹ "Li Aladhina aghdhabahum I'dam Dhafr Al-Masri [To Those Who Are Angered by Zafir Al-Masri's Execution]," Al-Hadaf, No. 810, March 24, 1986, p. 26.

municipal council, in which they fire-bombed his two automobiles in June 1987:

This operation serves as a warning to the person known as Sinyurah and his ilk: Those who allow their sick souls to be seduced by going outside of the national consensus and its plans should either return to the mainstream of this consensus or else their fate will be no better than those who in the past have been the object of the people's judgement.⁵⁰²

As expected, Sinyurah heeded the PFLP's warning and withdrew his candidacy.

In December 1987, the Palestinian uprising, generally known as the intifadhah, broke out in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. While the uprising achieved no material gains for the Palestinian residents of these territories, it succeeded in drawing international media attention to the Palestinian cause as never before and subjected Israel to unprecedented criticism and pressure from those countries which it considered its friends. It also heralded the emergence of vigilante groups claiming to operate in the name of the PFLP and Fatah, but over which these organizations apparently had very little control.

In its efforts to collect intelligence in order to arrest or kill the uprising's activists,⁵⁰³ the Israeli internal security apparatus increased the size of its informant network in the

⁵⁰² "Al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah: Al-Kharijun 'an al-Ijma' al-Watani sayuwajihuna Hukm al-Sha'b [The Popular Front: Those Outside of the National Consensus Will Face the People's Judgement]," Al-Hadaf, No. 869, June 29, 1987, p. 17.

⁵⁰³ P. Taylor, "'Black Panther' Gang Stalks Nablus, Sparking PLO Concern," Reuters, October 17, 1989; See H. Hamad, "Palestinian Gangs Blamed for Murders," AP, October 24, 1989.

territories. By October 1989, it became apparent that Israel's counterintelligence activities were beginning to impair the Palestinian underground organization's ability to function properly. At that time, units affiliated with the PFLP and Fatah emerged⁵⁰⁴ whose primary function was to eliminate suspected collaborators.

The Fatah-linked Black Panther organization, and its PFLP counterpart, the Red Eagle group, appear to have been formed, initially, to persuade Palestinian residents, through intimidation and terror, not to cooperate with the Israeli authorities. Composed of young males, the undisciplined groups (particularly the Red Eagles) lashed out at fellow Palestinians.⁵⁰⁵ In their zeal, they murdered their victims, many of whom had no ties with the Israeli authorities, in a brutal and gruesome fashion. On December 1,² 1989, Israeli television interviewed Red Eagle member Jabir Hawash, who had been arrested three weeks before:

Hawash's job was to question suspected collaborators and to kill those targeted for special treatment. "I questioned 140 collaborators," he said. "We'd ask them a few questions. Eventually, we'd use force and they'd tell everything."

He described how he murdered a Nablus woman, Umm

⁵⁰⁴ P. Taylor, "'Black Panther' Gang Stalks Nablus, Sparking PLO Concern," Reuters, October 17, 1989.

⁵⁰⁵ There is no indication that Red Eagle operatives receive any sort of ideological training. A photo essay in Hamas' monthly magazine however, shows recruits receiving religious instruction, as well as combat training. See "I'dad al-Mujahidin [The Preparation of Holy Warriors]," Filastin al-Muslimah (March 1990), front inside cover.

Barakat, who happened to be his cousin: "I said to the guy that was with me, 'Let's kill Umm Barakat.' He said, 'Why not.' So we went up to her flat (at night). We went in and knocked on the door. She woke up. Of course, we were masked and were wearing khaki."

"She came down with us. I didn't ask her anything until she had come down with us. I took her out in the street, to the spot where I intended to kill her. I tied her up. I blindfolded her and smashed her head with an axe."⁵⁰⁶

The apparently indiscriminate manner of the actions against suspected collaborators led many residents to complain to journalists and the PLO to broadcast appeals to the groups to correct their behavior.⁵⁰⁷ The PFLP, in contrast, issued no such appeals and Hamas called specifically for the intimidation of suspected collaborators.⁵⁰⁸ Local Palestinian activists and journalists interpreted the attacks as a loss of control by the uprising's Unified Leadership, of which both the PFLP and Fatah

⁵⁰⁶ "Confessions of a Youthful Casbah Killer," Jerusalem Post, December 4, 1989. See S. Shargorodsky, "Soldiers Kill 4 Members of Underground Palestinian Group," AP, December 1, 1989; "Serbia Unleashes Trade War on Fellow Yugoslav Republic," Reuters, December 2, 1989; H. Carnegie, "Brutality and Harsh Attitudes Mark Intifada's Anniversary," Financial Times, December 8, 1989, p. 4; M. Curtius, "Intifadah: 2 Years Lead to Impasse," Boston Globe, December 8, 1989, p. 1.

⁵⁰⁷ P. Taylor, Reuter, October 17, 1989, op. cit.; See H. Hamad, "Palestinian Gangs Blamed for Murders," AP, October 24, 1989; J. Greenberg, "IDF Smashes 'Red Eagle' Terror Gang in Nablus," Jerusalem Post, November 10, 1989; "Deaths Mark Anniversary of 'State,'" Facts on File, November 17, 1989, p. 856 B2; J. Greenberg, "Suspected Informer on 'Red Eagles' Gang Stabbed in Nablus Casbah," Jerusalem Post, November 22, 1989.

⁵⁰⁸ A. al-Qassam, "Al-Intifadhah al-Mutamayyizah [The Outstanding Uprising]," Filastin al-Muslimah (March 1989), pp. 37-38.

were members.⁵⁰⁹ The Christian Science Monitor quoted an Fatah activist as saying that ". . . until now the Unified Leadership has controlled the intifadah, but after a year or two, it may not be able to."⁵¹⁰ The appearance of Revolutionary Security Apparatus, a group affiliated with Fatah, in January 1990, signaled that organization's attempt to regain control of the vigilantes. On January 16 of that year, it staged a march through Nablus, ". . . vowing to fight thieves and those who abuse power," referring to members of the Black Panther and Red Eagle groups.⁵¹¹ It was not long, however, before the Revolutionary Security Apparatus began to mimic the very groups to which it claimed to be opposed. On February 26, in the West Bank village of Beit Furik, for example, it incited a mob to lynch a suspected collaborator. Residents claimed that Ali Nasrara ". . . was attacked by hundreds of villagers, who trampled, kicked and beat him with sticks and rocks He

⁵⁰⁹ Neither Hamas nor the Palestinian Islamic Jihad joined the Unified Leadership of the Uprising, due to its secular character. They operated independently instead, issuing their own statements, organizing their own commercial strikes, and carrying out their own attacks, while maintaining an informal liaison. See Bekhor, pp. 43-46.

⁵¹⁰ G. D. Moffett III, "Legacy of Resistance Lives On," Christian Science Monitor, November 28, 1989, p. 6; T. M. Phelps, "Grim Forecast on Uprising; As Intifadah Enters 3rd Year, Fears That Guns Will Replace Stones," Newsday, December 9, 1989, p. 7.

⁵¹¹ "Palestinians March in Nablus, Warn Collaborator Killers," Reuters, January 16, 1990.

was seriously wounded and taken to his aunt's home, where the crowd attacked again, killing him."⁵¹²

Another group, whose affiliation is unclear, also attempted to halt the vigilantes' activity. The Guardians of the Uprising, formed in December 1989, dealt with collaborators by holding them under house arrest and punished vigilantes by beating them in public.⁵¹³

Most efforts to control the vigilantes have come from Fatah activists. Likewise, most expressions of concern regarding the vigilante phenomenon have emanated from figures affiliated with the mainstream PLO factions. They have not come from the PFLP and groups (such as Hamas) which share its outlook, for whom intimidation and assassination of suspected collaborators are a matter of policy.⁵¹⁴ PLO activist Adnan Damiri recently wrote in the pro-Fatah Jerusalem daily Al-Fajr that ". . . the revolution is the phantom starting to eat its children For too long we have been trying to find excuses for all these executions of people who work with the authorities We run away from questions by the foreign and Israeli press about

⁵¹² J. Greenberg, "W. Bank Mob Lynches 'Collaborator,'" Jerusalem Post, February 28, 1990.

⁵¹³ G. D. Moffett III, "Palestinian Leadership Tries to Discipline Vigilantes," Christian Science Monitor, May 11, 1990, p. 1.

⁵¹⁴ See, e.g. Abu Ahmad Fu'ad, "Al-Kifah al-Musallah Khiyaruna al-Thawri [The Armed Struggle is our Revolutionary Option]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1082, December 22, 1991, pp. 50-55; Filastin al-Muslimah (March 1989), pp. 37-39. op. cit.

the phenomenon that has emerged: every knock on a door by a masked man becomes a nail in the coffin."⁵¹⁵

The PFLP refrained from publicly acknowledging its association with the Red Eagle organization until relatively recently, although the Red Eagles have identified with their parent organization from the beginning.⁵¹⁶ In July 1991, the PFLP printed a statement in the name of the "Red Eagle Units of the Popular Front" in Al-Hadaf, in which they claimed responsibility for attacks on Israeli soldiers in the Gaza Strip. It made no mention of suspected collaborators.⁵¹⁷

In late October of 1991, as the parties to the Arab-Israeli dispute prepared to send delegates to the peace conference in Madrid, the PFLP's representative in the West Bank, Riyadh al-Maliki, threatened to apply psychological pressure to the Palestinian delegates, in an attempt to dissuade them from

⁵¹⁵ B. Hepburn, "Palestinians Grow Critical of 'Collaborator' Killings," Toronto Star, June 15, 1991, p. A2.

⁵¹⁶ Hamas, unlike the PFLP, was headquartered in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and its leaders and operatives readily acknowledged their links with the organization's armed units from the start, whether they were the pre-1992 Palestinian Mujahidin ("Palestinian Sentenced to Three Life Terms," Xinhua News Agency, Item No. 1006006, October 6, 1991) or the Al-Qassam Brigades which succeeded them (V. Lysechko, "Hamas Claims Responsibility for Explosions on Gaza Strip," TASS, February 13, 1992; S. al-Hijawi, Interview with Ibrahim Ghawshah, Official Spokesman for Hamas," Al-Ufuq, May 11, 1994, pp. 22-24 in FBIS-NES-94-094, May 16, 1994, pp. 16-18.).

⁵¹⁷ "Thuwwar al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah - Majmu'at al-Nisr al-Ahmar - tuhajimu Quwwat al-Ihtilal fi Khan Yunis [Popular Front Revolutionaries - The Red Eagle Units - Attack the Occupation Forces in Khan Yunis]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1059, July 7, 1991, p. 13.

attending, but stated that neither he nor his followers would physically prevent them from going.⁵¹⁸

More recently, the Red Eagle organization has attempted to derail the peace process by brutally attacking Israeli civilians living or working in the West Bank and Gaza, including those advocating Israeli withdrawal from those areas. On April 18, 1993, for example, the PFLP claimed responsibility for an operation in which Red Eagle operatives killed Israeli attorney Ian Feinberg as he took part in a meeting to coordinate the distribution of European Economic Community aid for the Gaza Strip.⁵¹⁹ His assailants hacked him to death with axes and knives. In its statement, the organization warned that ". . . every Zionist who touches the ground of Gaza and the West Bank is a target for our weapons."⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁸ R. Beeston and G. Brock, "Palestinian Team Meets Approval of Israeli Delegation," The Times, October 23, 1991, no page number given. See also "Al-Maliki wa Abu Hilal ya'qidan Mu'tamaran Sahafiyyan fi al-Funduq al-Watani fi al-Quds wa yu'akkidan 'ala Rafdh Mu'tamar Madrid [Al-Maliki and Abu Hilal hold a Press Conference at the National Hotel in Jerusalem and affirm their Rejection of the Madrid Conference]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1075, October 27, 1991, pp. 10-11.

⁵¹⁹ The statement further strengthened suspicions of a direct link between the PFLP's Damascus headquarters and the Red Eagle group. The link was confirmed, however, in a joint PFLP-DFLP statement, issued in the wake of the February 1994 Hebron massacre, in which ". . . [t]hey promise the 'martyrs and the people' that the DFLP's Red Star fighters and the PFLP's Red Eagles in the territories will take revenge against settlers and Israeli troops." "Arafat Calls for International Protection After Massacre," Agence France Presse, February 25, 1994.

⁵²⁰ "Ji'na naqtula al-Sahyuni [We Came to Kill the Zionist]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1144, April 25, 1993, p. 19.

The PFLP's tendency was to use assassination and intimidation in its attempts to scuttle PLO initiatives with which it disagreed. The PFLP was able, in this way, to exert a countervailing influence on policymaking in an organization so completely dominated by Fatah that the former could never hope to prevail by legitimate means. As long as the PLO did not negotiate directly with Israel, however, the PFLP remained a member, regarding the umbrella group as a symbol of Palestinian national legitimacy.

The PFLP thought it necessary to preserve at least the appearance of organizational unity. When the PLO entered into direct negotiations with Israel in 1993, the PFLP's strict adherence to its ideological principles left it with no choice but to leave the organization. However, unlike the PFLP-GC, it made no physical threats against 'Arafat⁵²¹ and, at worst, demanded his resignation.⁵²² Even after the PLO-Israel accord on Palestinian self-rule was signed in May 1994, the PFLP undertook not to attack the Palestinian authority's police force, fearing that this would foment civil unrest in the autonomous area.⁵²³

⁵²¹ "Palestinian Radicals Threaten Arafat with Death," Reuters, August 30, 1993.

⁵²² M. Hutten, "Russia Injects Hope into Autonomy Talks," Agence France Presse, March 12, 1994.

⁵²³ K. Dozier, "PLO Faces New Task: Governing. New Police Force Lacks Funds, Gear," Washington Post, May 6, 1994, p. A30. Both the PFLP and Hamas, however, stipulated that should the police attempt to confiscate their members' weapons, the latter (continued...)

The PFLP's ideology, structure, and operating environment are the primary factors which determine its policies, strategies, operating methods, and targets. While the PFLP's operational scope theoretically still covers actions against its international, regional, and local enemies, its current meager means have severely limited its options. With the Soviet bloc's disappearance, it can no longer count on the logistical support for its international operations which it once enjoyed from that quarter. With the loss of Lebanon and Jordan as primary staging areas for cross-border attacks against Israel, as well as for operations against Western targets in the Middle East - and with the severe restrictions imposed upon its movements in Syria - the only area where the PFLP can still operate with any degree of initiative remains Israeli-controlled territory. It is this arena where the PFLP has decided to focus most of its efforts.⁵²⁴

⁵²³ (...continued)

would defend themselves. On May 18, 1994, Hamas' representative in Damascus warned that "... [i]f the Palestinian police try to disarm our people they will be subjecting themselves to grave dangers because our men will not allow them to do so ... they will kill anyone who tries to deprive us of the right to confront the enemy." See I. Hamza, "Radicals Refuse to Disarm, Warn Palestinian Police," Reuters, May 18, 1994. They continued to hold these views despite their petitions to the PLO to be allowed to participate in the autonomous authority's governing bodies. See MENA in Arabic, 1305 gmt, April 23, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-079, April 25, 1994.

⁵²⁴ "Assad Changed Syrian Stance on Peace with Israel: PFLP," Agence France Presse, January 18, 1994.

The PFLP also remains adamantly opposed to any peace agreement with Israel whatsoever.⁵²⁵ The PLO's decision to negotiate directly with the Israeli government led to the PFLP's withdrawal from the organization which it formerly recognized as the Palestinian people's 'sole legitimate representative'. While the PFLP had been a member of the PLO since the former's establishment in late 1967, its rigid conformity to a maximalist doctrine has caused it to continually lag behind the more flexible Fatah in being able to influence the organization's decisionmaking process.⁵²⁶

The following chapter describes the PFLP's relationship with and position within the PLO over the years and how its inability to adapt a doctrine to changing times has marginalized it as a force in mainstream Palestinian politics.

⁵²⁵ H. Habib, "Al-Yawm al-Aswad fi al-Bait al-Abyadh [The Black Day in the White House]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1162, September 19, 1993, pp. 8-9.

⁵²⁶ Hamas, which is also resolutely opposed to any peace agreement with Israel, was never in direct competition with Fatah, since it never belonged to the PLO. Instead it has succeeded in creating an independent parallel movement to which it hopes to attract followers disenchanted with the PLO's policies. It has succeeded in developing its own powerbase and financial sources and has received aid from both the conservative Persian Gulf states and through private donations. (See B. W. Nelan, "Hamas and The Heartland," Time, February 15, 1993, p. 37). The PFLP, whose threats against wealthy pro-western Arab governments guaranteed that it would receive no aid from that quarter, appears to have relied solely on private - and comparatively paltry - donations. (See, e.g. "Tabarru'at [Donations]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1005, May 6, 1990, p. 9; "Tabarru'at [Donations]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1101, May 24, 1992, p. 17, which indicate individual contributions of a few thousand dollars, at most).

Part Three: The PFLP's Role and Position within the PLO

This chapter will discuss the rivalry which has existed between Fatah and the PFLP since the latter's establishment shortly after the June 1967 war. Almost from its founding in December of that year, the PFLP participated in the PLO's deliberations and functions and remained in the organization until September 1993. At that time, the PLO's dominant Fatah leadership - under Yasir 'Arafat - committed what the PFLP considered the 'unpardonable sin' of direct negotiations with Israel, aimed at reaching a peace agreement. The traditional differences outlined earlier in this study between the centrist, non-ideological Palestinian nationalist trend and its more doctrinaire radical counterpart are nowhere more clearly illustrated than in the competition between Fatah and the PFLP for influence within the PLO. While several organizations have comprised the PLO during the course of its history - in addition to countless independent members - they have generally belonged to one of two blocs headed either by Fatah or the PFLP. This section, then, will focus on these two groups and the characteristics which have made Fatah dominant within the PLO and the PFLP either subordinate or marginal.

Fatah has historically concentrated its efforts on achieving one aim: the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state on the territory which had constituted Palestine under the former British Mandate, even if only on a portion of that territory. Having set this goal, all strategies, alliances, and tactics

which might aid in its attainment have been theoretically acceptable to Fatah's leadership⁵²⁷ (including recognition of Israel), the only limiting factors being Palestinian public reaction or the effect that a particular policy might have on the organization's links with valued allies.

While the PFLP has shared Fatah's goal of establishing a sovereign Palestinian state, the two groups have disagreed on practically all other issues. The PFLP's program calls for a Palestinian state on all territory currently controlled by Israel and absolutely refuses to coexist with the latter. While in 1981 it belatedly accepted the notion of phased territorial recovery, first articulated by the PLO in 1974, the PFLP has regarded this as only a tactical step to place the Palestinian resistance in a more favorable position against its stronger enemy. The PFLP's program is also more multifaceted than Fatah's, with Israel's elimination and the establishment of a Palestinian state in its place being the first among several slightly less important aims. Basing its strategy on the Maoist doctrine described earlier, the PFLP has tended to categorize other organizations and governments as either enemies or friends according to stringent ideological criteria and assessments based on sweeping generalizations. Fatah, on the other hand, has tended to ally itself, or at least have dealings with any element likely to aid in achieving its aim

⁵²⁷ Among Fatah's early founding principles was the notion that "... the liberation battle takes priority over any ideological, political, and social contradictions." Fatah, p. 206.

and, as a result, has been able to maneuver more deftly than the PFLP.

Chapter 11: The PFLP as Fatah's Principal Competitor: A Comparison Between Approaches

Shortly after its founding in 1967, the PFLP began to establish itself as Fatah's main competitor for dominance in the Palestinian national movement. The competition tilted in Fatah's favor from the start. By late 1967, Fatah had already been operating as a cohesive, unified organization for the past eight years, while the PFLP had only recently been constituted from a coalition of three groups: Heroes of the Return (led by Habash), Vengeance Youth (led by Nayif Hawatimah), and the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) (led by Ahmad Jibril). The first two had been the conservative and radical wings of the PFLP's predecessor, the ANM, and the third had been a group of Palestinian refugees who had served in the Syrian army in the 1950's and had formed a faction of the Fatah organization in the early 1960's. Responding to call by Habash for unity, the groups formed the PFLP at year's end.⁵²⁸

The unity, however, was short-lived. By August 1968, Jibril had split with the PFLP to form the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command (PFLP-GC). Jibril, who had hitherto commanded the PFLP's field operatives, had become disillusioned with what he considered the Front leadership's excessive attention to ideology at the expense of armed operations. Jibril also criticized the Front's emphasis on

⁵²⁸ See generally Cobban, pp. 140-163.

overthrowing Arab governments over operations against Israel.⁵²⁹ In February 1969, the PFLP's 'leftist' faction under Hawatimah broke away to form the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP). Hawatimah's faction had attempted to take over the Front's leadership after Habash had been imprisoned by the Syrian government in March 1968.⁵³⁰ After escaping from prison in November, Habash reasserted his authority in the organization by initiating a campaign of physical intimidation against the Hawatimah faction. Hawatimah and his followers received protection from Fatah units, and reconstituted themselves as the PDFLP (the word 'popular' was dropped in mid-1974).⁵³¹

It was Fatah's cohesiveness and ability to form alliances with other Palestinian factions, in contrast to the PFLP's disunity, which enabled it to amass the required number of seats to gain a majority at the Fifth PNC session in February 1969. It has maintained that majority since then and expanded its influence within the PLO by gaining control of all key leadership positions and determining the proportion at which it and other

⁵²⁹ J. Amos, Palestinian Resistance: Organization of a Nationalist Movement (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980), p. 91.

⁵³⁰ The Syrians, who feared Israeli retaliation, were reported to be suppressing the activities of the Palestinian organizations operating from its territory. L. Sobel, ed., Palestinian Impasse: Arab Guerrillas and International Terror (New York: Facts on File, 1977) (hereinafter "Sobel"), p. 22.

⁵³¹ Cobban, pp. 144-145.

constituent groups are represented in the organization's governing bodies.⁵³²

A. International and Regional Alliances

The PFLP's practice of allying itself only with ideologically compatible governments and actively threatening the existence of states with whose position it disagreed necessarily deprived it of important sources of revenue and political support. Fatah, on the other hand, accepted aid from wherever it was forthcoming and was consequently able to broaden its regional and international support base. Since the early 1960's,⁵³³ for example, Fatah had developed close unofficial relations with Saudi Arabia. For the Saudis, Fatah was an attractive alternative to radical nationalist groups, such as the ANM. The anti-Nasserist attitude of many Fatah leaders and the group's sizable contingent of Muslim Brotherhood members allowed Saudi Arabia to distance itself from the leftist Palestinian organizations, while maintaining its Islamic activist image and demonstrating its pro-Palestinian nationalist sentiments.⁵³⁴

⁵³² S. Mussalam, The PLO: The Palestine Liberation Organization (Brattleboro, Vermont: Amana Books, 1990) (hereinafter "Mussalam"), p. 9. See also H. al-Husayni, "Dr. George Habash on Madrid Peace Conference, Just Peace: I am for Peace, Repatriation Right, Jerusalem, and State; We will Stay within PLO Framework Through National Council," Al-Sharq al-Awsat, November 1, 1991, p. 5 in FBIS-NES-91-220, November 14, 1991, pp. 5-7.

⁵³³ Fatah's expansion of its ties occurred at a time when the PFLP's predecessor, the ANM, was committed to acting on Egypt's behalf alone.

⁵³⁴ El-Rayyes, p. 118.

At the same time, Fatah courted the Algerians, who had become independent of France in 1962. While Algeria did not send Fatah its first arms shipment until 1965, when Houari Boumedienne came to power, it did arrange Fatah's first direct contacts with the People's Republic of China (PRC), North Korea, and the Viet Cong. In early 1964, Fatah's representative in Algiers, Khalil al-Wazir, was able to arrange for his inclusion in a high-level Algerian delegation to Beijing, where he inaugurated what was to become a close relationship between Fatah and the Chinese government.⁵³⁵

B. Al-Karamah Boosts Fatah's Regional Standing; Fatah Deals With All Interested Parties

In the wake of the battle of al-Karamah in March 1968,⁵³⁶ and the consequent upsurge in the Palestinian organizations' popularity in the Arab world, Fatah sent emissaries to the major Arab countries in order to solicit financial aid and political support. While the PFLP's leadership continued to characterize the Egyptian government as a 'petit bourgeois' regime',⁵³⁷ Fatah strengthened its links with 'Abd al-Nasir, securing promises of arms and training.⁵³⁸ Saudi Arabia (which regarded the PFLP as a

⁵³⁵ Cobban, pp. 31-32. See also Abu Iyad, p. 42.

⁵³⁶ During which the Palestinian organizations stationed there inflicted unexpectedly heavy losses on their Israeli attackers.

⁵³⁷ Cobban, p. 144.

⁵³⁸ Abu Iyad, pp. 62-63.

threat)⁵³⁹ viewed Fatah as an effective counterweight to the Palestinian national movement's leftist trend and authorized immediate financial aid for its activities. In addition, Fatah secured the Saudi government's permission to set up support committees among the Kingdom's Palestinian population and arranged to have seven percent of every resident Palestinian's salary automatically deducted each month in order to augment its finances.⁵⁴⁰ Fatah representatives were equally successful in winning Sudan's support.⁵⁴¹

It was Fatah's newfound relationship with the Egyptian government which enabled it to establish links with the Soviet Union. 'Arafat joined Nasir on a 1968 journey to the USSR and this was followed by a visit to Moscow by 'Arafat alone in October 1971. By January 1972, Fatah had secured Soviet agreement to provide its members with military training and logistical support and by September, as a result of a return visit by 'Arafat to Moscow - accompanied by Habash - both organizations began to receive direct arms shipments from the USSR.⁵⁴²

⁵³⁹ Abu Iyad, p. 63; See also El-Rayyes, p. 118.

⁵⁴⁰ Abu Iyad, p. 63. See also El-Rayyes, p. 118.

⁵⁴¹ Abu Iyad, p. 64.

⁵⁴² J. Reppert, "The Soviets and the PLO: The Convenience of Politics," in A. Norton and M. Greenberg, eds., The International Relations of the Palestine Liberation Organization (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989) (hereinafter "Reppert"), p. 112; "Moscow Plans Its Next Show Trial. In An Explosive Court Case, Russia Will Re-examine Its Ban On

(continued...)

Fatah's relationship with the USSR bore diplomatic fruit in 1970's when the Soviets repeatedly referred to the PLO as the Palestinian people's 'sole, legitimate representative'. They made efforts to have the organization included in international conferences and deliberations⁵⁴³ and the PLO's achievement of observer status at the United Nations in 1974 is due, in no small part, to Soviet efforts on its behalf.⁵⁴⁴

Fatah's first official meeting with the Chinese leadership occurred in February 1970, followed by a visit to North Vietnam during the same month. In both China and North Vietnam, Fatah representatives were impressed with the realistic, surprisingly non-ideological approach taken by the leaders of those countries in pursuing their agenda. Chinese leaders were not the least bit fazed when they were told that Fatah was seeking aid from the Soviet Union at a time when Sino-Soviet tensions were at their height. On the contrary, Premier Zhou Enlai told Fatah delegate Salah Khalaf that as a national liberation movement, Fatah "...

⁵⁴² (...continued)

Communists," Time, June 8, 1992, p. 26; P. Quinn-Judge, "Files Show KGB Ties to Terrorism," Boston Globe, May 29, 1992, p. 1; J. Lloyd, "Soviet Communist Party to Go on Trial: Old Regime Likened to Nazis as Moscow Prepares to Judge Lenin and his Heirs," Financial Times, May 27, 1992, p. 2; "Opening the Moscow Files," Los Angeles Times, May 27, 1992, p. B6; A. Cooperman, "Russia Reveals Communist Party's Past Role in Terrorism," AP, May 26, 1992; S. Schmemmann, "Soviets Gave Arms to Palestine Band," New York Times, May 26, 1992, p. A7. The Soviets agreed to provide the PFLP with "... substantial military aid ..." in return for that organization's curtailment of its foreign operations. See El-Rayyes, p. 130.

⁵⁴³ El-Rayyes, pp. 130-132.

⁵⁴⁴ Reppert, p. 114.

should try to get help wherever you can find it."⁵⁴⁵ In Vietnam, Khalaf learned the value of tactical compromise - the acceptance of a less than total fulfillment of demands - in order to achieve intermediate gains, as the Vietcong had done when it accepted Vietnam's partition into two sovereign states.⁵⁴⁶

A 1969 interview with 'Arafat printed in the Beirut daily Al-Sayyad sums up the reasons for Fatah's policy of seeking aid and support from a variety of sources:

I want that homeland even if the devil is the one to liberate it for me. Am I in a position to reject the participation or assistance of any man? Can I be asked, for example, to refuse the financial aid of Saudi Arabia with the claim that it belongs to the right? After all, it is with the Saudis' money that I buy arms from China.⁵⁴⁷

By maintaining friendly links with governments of all political shades - and constantly seeking out new friends - the Fatah-dominated PLO was able to expand its influence internationally and participate in initiatives affecting the Arab-Israeli dispute as an element to be reckoned with. It had

⁵⁴⁵ Abu Iyad, p. 67.

⁵⁴⁶ Abu Iyad, p. 69.

⁵⁴⁷ Interview with Yasir 'Arafat in Al-Sayyad, January 23, 1969, quoted in A. Gowers and T. Walker, Behind the Myth: Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Revolution (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1992) (hereinafter "Gowers and Walker"), p. 62. Such a course of action was unacceptable to the PFLP. In an interview given the following year, Habash asserted that "... we would never accept the money they are getting from reactionary [regimes?]; we would never touch money that smells of American oil ... for us to accept money from them would mean to trample on our moral beliefs, to lose our honor." O. Fallaci, "A Leader of the Fedayeen: 'We Want a War Like the Vietnam War'," Life, June 12, 1970, p. 34.

transcended its status as a mere 'guerrilla group' and had effectively become the Palestinians' representative to the world community.

C. PFLP Deals Only With Ideologically Compatible Interlocutors; Its Isolation Increases as Regional Conditions Change

The PFLP, on the other hand, insisted on dealing only with elements which were both pro-Palestinian and militantly anti-Western. It remained hostile to all other elements, in many cases targeting them for armed attack.⁵⁴⁸ This attitude has earned the PFLP hostility and fear in kind from most quarters and left it little room for either political or diplomatic maneuver. Consequently, while Fatah (as the PLO's dominant faction) has risen from a militant organization to the status of a government-in-exile, the PFLP remains - in the eyes of most governments - a terrorist organization whose theater of operations has been reduced by political and economic circumstances from the world arena to the area encompassing Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip.

The PFLP's political isolation became even more apparent with the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991 and that event's convergence with the Madrid Middle East peace conference in

⁵⁴⁸ The PFLP's role in escalating tensions between the Jordanian monarchy and the Palestinian organizations operating in Jordan led to the latter's expulsion from the country - despite Fatah's efforts to maintain a correct relationship with King Hussain - beginning in September 1970. The PFLP similarly encouraged leftist Lebanese groups to overthrow the conservative Phalangist government in Lebanon, in contrast to Fatah's efforts to coordinate its anti-Israel operations with its hosts. (See Chapter 2).

November of that year.⁵⁴⁹ In one fell swoop, the PFLP lost the support of a superpower, as well as its ability to count on Syria⁵⁵⁰ for shelter and aid. With the Soviet Union's disappearance, the PFLP also lost the support of Moscow's Eastern European satellites and was compelled to begin a desperate search for other ideologically compatible allies.

Unwilling to modify its views, even at this late date, the PFLP choice of partners was narrowed to the world's remaining communist countries (Cuba and North Korea), the militantly anti-western Middle Eastern nations (Iran and Libya), and the Palestinian and Islamic groups opposed to the Arab-Israeli peace process. Its opposition to the 1993 Israeli-PLO negotiations led it to effectively withdraw from the PLO altogether. As a result, the PFLP has been marginalized as an actor in mainstream Palestinian politics.

⁵⁴⁹ "Al-Taqrir al-Siyasi al-Sadr 'an al-Lajnah al-Markaziyyah li al-Jabhah al-Sha'biyyah li Tahrir Filastin, Ayar 1991: Harb al-Khalij Muraja'ah wa Taqyim al-Marhalah al-Siyasiyyah al-Jadidah [The Political Report Issued by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, May 1991: The Gulf War - Review and Evaluation of the New Political Stage], " Al-Hadaf, No. 1075, October 27, 1991, pp. 24-28.

⁵⁵⁰ Syria had also depended on the Soviet Union for military and financial assistance.

Chapter 12: Fatah-PFLP Rivalry within the PLO

The PLO considers itself a political umbrella for the major Palestinian resistance organizations, the Palestinian trade, professional and student associations, and Palestinian population concentrations all over the world. Although Fatah dominates the PLO, the PFLP was - until the 1993 signing of the Declaration of Principles with Israel - the organization's second largest constituent group and played a prominent, if indirect, role in its affairs. This section will discuss the rivalry which has existed between the two organizations since the late 1960's, examining the PFLP's efforts to influence the PLO's decisionmaking and the degree to which Fatah has been successful in countering that influence.

The Palestinian National Council (PNC), the Executive Committee, and the Central Council are the PLO's three primary decisionmaking bodies. The PNC is the PLO's 'supreme authority' whose task it is to formulate the organization's policies and programs (Article 7 of the PLO's Fundamental Law).⁵⁵¹ It is elected for a three-year period and meets annually (article 8).

A. Palestinian National Council

PNC members may be elected as representatives of 'political-military organizations (such as Fatah or the PFLP), representatives of 'mass' organizations, representatives of the

⁵⁵¹ Pan American World Airways, Inc. v. Aetna Casualty and Surety Co., 368 F. Supp. 1098, Exhibit 68 (S.D.N.Y. 1973), aff'd., 505 F. 2d 898 (2d. Cir. 1974) (hereinafter Fundamental Law).

Palestine National Liberation Army (PNLA), or individually.⁵⁵² Outwardly, at least, the PNC appears to reflect the widest possible political and social spectrum of Palestinians worldwide. In reality, PNC members are selected, for the most part, through outright appointment by the PLO's chairman, as well as through efforts by the dominant Fatah group to gain control of the Palestinian trade unions and professional organizations (see below).

B. Executive Committee

Despite the PNC's official status as the PLO's ultimate authority, it is the Executive Committee (whose chairman is, at least formally, chosen by the PNC [article 13]), which formulated the law governing elections to the National Council (article 5). It is also the Executive Committee's chairman, Yasir 'Arafat, who effectively determines each PLO constituent group's degree of representation at PNC meetings, thereby ensuring his re-election.⁵⁵³

Formally, however, the PNC - as the organization's supreme authority⁵⁵⁴ - reviews the Executive Committee's annual report on the PLO's activities. It considers the Palestine National Fund [PNF]'s annual report and approves the PLO's budget. The

⁵⁵² Mussalam, p. 12.

⁵⁵³ H. Al-Husayni, "Dr. George Habash on Madrid Peace Conference, Just Peace: I am for Peace, Repatriation Right, Jerusalem, and State; We will Stay with PLO Framework through the National Council," Al-Sharq al-Awsat, November 1, 1991 in FBIS-NES-91-220, November 14, 1991, pp. 5-7.

⁵⁵⁴ Mussalam, p. 11.

PNC's various committees may also submit proposals to be deliberated (article 10).⁵⁵⁵

Finally, the PNC elects the Executive Committee chairman, who in turn, appoints its fourteen other members (articles 13 and 14). Whereas the PNC has supreme authority in voting in formulating the PLO's general policy, the Executive Committee is considered the organization's ". . . highest executive authority . . . "; that is, it has the final say in all matters related to executing the resolutions approved by the PNC. While the PNC meets only once a year, the Executive Committee is constantly in session and its members carry out their tasks on a full-time basis (article 15).⁵⁵⁶

The Executive Committee may carry out PNC resolutions as it sees fit, provided that its actions do not contradict the PLO Charter or Fundamental Law. It is authorized to establish the departments and sub-organizations necessary to execute PLO policy and to perform the organization's routine tasks (article 18). The Executive Committee is additionally charged with preparing the annual budget (article 16).

The functions which the departments established by the Executive Committee perform have been likened by some commentators to those in which a government engages.⁵⁵⁷ Indeed,

⁵⁵⁵ See also Id., pp. 15-16.

⁵⁵⁶ Id., p. 22.

⁵⁵⁷ See, e.g. Id., p. 5 and C. Rubenberg, The Palestine Liberation Organization: Its Institutional Structure (Belmont, (continued...))

were it an actual government, the PLO could be said to incorporate the equivalents of a presidential cabinet (the Executive Committee), a Judicial Branch, a foreign affairs ministry (the Political Department), a defense ministry (the Military Department), a finance ministry (the PNF), and an education ministry (the Higher Learning and Education Department), to name a few.⁵⁵⁸

This analogy, however, is not an entirely accurate characterization of the PLO. While these departments have equivalents in legitimate governments, one can find their parallels in non-governmental organizations as well (labor unions and corporations, for example).⁵⁵⁹ The PLO differs from a state, such as Egypt, in that it exercises no sovereignty, for the time being, and is subject to the benevolence of the government on whose territory it resides.⁵⁶⁰ The PLO also

⁵⁵⁷ (...continued)

Mass.: Institute of Arab Studies, 1983) (hereinafter "Rubenberg"), p. 5.

⁵⁵⁸ Mussalam, p. 23.

⁵⁵⁹ Most large corporations have security departments and internal organizations competent to rule on infractions of company by-laws. Many corporations and unions which can afford to do so see to the social needs of their employees and members as well.

⁵⁶⁰ This transient status made it difficult for the PNC to meet regularly in order to deal with whatever "legislative or quasi-legislative" problems arose between its sessions. In 1973, "... it was decided to establish a second but smaller legislative body which would function as a link between the PNC when it was in recess and the PLO's Executive Committee."

Mussalam, p. 19.

(continued...)

differs from a government-in-exile, such as that of Poland following its occupation by Nazi Germany in 1939, in that the PLO did not previously exercise sovereignty. Such a position creates serious difficulties for the PLO in extending its authority over constituent groups and organizations outside its authority, as well as enforcing its decisions among those whom it claims as subjects.⁵⁶¹ Since Palestinians are scattered all over the world, and since PLO decisions generally carry no authority in the countries in which they live, compliance with them is voluntary and becomes difficult if the decisions conflict with local laws. The result is that agreements concluded with the PLO by other parties are not binding on all of its proclaimed constituents because the organization may not be capable of applying them in all regions.

⁵⁶⁰ (...continued)

Even in its present incarnation as the Palestinian National Authority, the PLO leadership - under its agreement with Israel - must coordinate its actions with the Israeli government.

⁵⁶¹ These subjects are Palestinians everywhere, according to article 4 of the Fundamental Law, which states that " . . . [a]ll Palestinians are natural members in the Palestine Liberation Organization. They execute their duties in Liberating their homeland according to their abilities and capabilities [sic]. The Palestinian people is the basic foundation of this Organization." The PLO's ability to extend its authority over all Palestinians under its jurisdiction will be tested in the coming months, when it is expected to assume power in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area. C. Murphy, "Israeli, PLO Negotiators Agree on Police Force, Prisoner Release," Washington Post, April 13, 1994, p. A24. See also C. Hedges, "Israel and PLO in Accord on Palestinian Police Force," New York Times, April 13, 1994, p. A3.

C. Enforcement of Decisions

The PLO incorporates institutions and departments which could, however, assume the duties of government upon achieving sovereignty over a territory. Its closest parallel is the Jewish Agency, which served as the recognized representative of the Jewish community in pre-1948 Mandatory Palestine to the British authorities and provided for many of its constituents' social, economic, and security needs. The quasi-governmental institutions which it developed were later converted into what became the government of the State of Israel in 1948.⁵⁶²

Like the PLO, the Labor Zionist-oriented Jewish Agency competed with rival organizations (such as the Revisionist Zionists) for authority and influence over Mandatory Palestine's Jewish population. This competition finally reached the point where the Jewish Agency's unofficial military wing, the Haganah,

⁵⁶² Article 4 of the League of Nations' authorization of the British Mandate over Palestine (September 29, 1923) states that:

[a]n appropriate Jewish agency shall be recognized as a public body for the purpose of advising and cooperating with the Administration of Palestine in such economic, social and other matters as may affect the establishment of the Jewish national home and the interests of the Jewish population in Palestine, and, subject always to the control of the Administration, to assist and take part in the development of the country.

The Zionist Organization, so long as its organization and constitution are in the opinion of the Mandatory appropriate, shall be recognized as such agency. It shall take steps in consultation with His Britannic Majesty's Government to secure the cooperation of all Jews who are willing to assist in the establishment of the Jewish national home.

Survey of Palestine, p. 5.

captured and imprisoned members of the Revisionist-led Irgun and LEHI militant groups. This was an attempt to limit the ability of those organizations to carry out operations which might embarrass the Jewish Agency before world public opinion.⁵⁶³

The Haganah's efforts to extend its authority over rival Jewish organizations finally met with success, following Israel's establishment, in what later became known as the 'Altalena incident'. On June 20, 1948, five weeks after Israel declared its independence, the cargo ship Altalena attempted to land near Tel Aviv with a shipment of weapons which the newly-formed Israel Defense Forces (IDF) badly needed in order to repel the invading Arab forces. The Irgun, which had hitherto been an independent underground organization - and owned the ship and its cargo - demanded that the weapons go to its soldiers and that it have control over how those weapons were to be used. Israel's new prime minister, David Ben Gurion (under whose authority the pre-state Haganah had operated), refused, countering that Israel had one army now and that only the government had the authority to decide on how the weapons would be allocated. When it became clear that the Irgun would not hand over the weapons, Ben Gurion ordered the IDF to destroy the ship and its cargo. Soon thereafter, the Irgun disbanded.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶³ I. Black and B. Morris, Israel's Secret Wars: A History of Israel's Intelligence Services (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991) (hereinafter "Black and Morris"), p. 18.

⁵⁶⁴ "Altalina," Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. 1 (Damascus: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1984), p. 281.

The Fatah-dominated PLO similarly vies with rival organizations for dominance, both inside and outside the umbrella organization. This rivalry is most clearly visible in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where the local militant and Islamic fundamentalist Palestinian groups compete for control of local commercial and professional associations (as well as geographical areas) in an effort to emerge the dominant political organization should a Palestinian state be established. The intensity of this competition has often resulted in bloody armed clashes among the groups and diverted their efforts away from their declared common aim of forcing Israel to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.⁵⁶⁵

The absence of a territory over which it could exercise control greatly hampered the PLO in its efforts to establish a stable regime capable of enforcing its decisions among those over whom it claims authority. In those countries which have allowed it to operate within their boundaries, it is subject to the will of the governments in power. In Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip, it was considered an illegal organization and therefore

⁵⁶⁵ See, e.g. M. Parks, "In Peace Talks' Shadow, Islamic Group Fights PLO for Place in Sun. Gaza Strip: Just as in Former Colonies in Africa and Asia, Political Rivalries are Intensifying as a Palestinian State Looks More Possible," Los Angeles Times, November 4, 1992, p. A5. See also "Palestinian Nationalists Torch West Bank Houses," Reuters, April 4, 1990; "Qutaish: Ma jara fi 'Awarta Tandhif li al-Jabhah al-Dakhiliyyah min al-'Umala' wa al-Mashbuhin [Qutaish: What Happened in 'Awarta is a Cleansing of the Internal Front of Agents and Suspicious People]," Al-Hadaf, No. 1002, April 15, 1990, p. 18.

required to operate underground.⁵⁶⁶ Under such circumstances, it is difficult for any organization to consistently enforce its decisions - or to even be assured that it will remain the dominant power. Consequently, it was difficult to conceive of the PLO as a conventional government or even as an authority which truly represented its putative constituents.

Despite these limitations, however, the PLO succeeded in establishing the basic principles under which the secular Palestinian resistance movement operates. Until September 1993, there were two primary factions within the PLO itself: Fatah, which dominated the organization and the PFLP, which was the organization's largest opposition faction. While both were united in their desire to establish a Palestinian entity along secular lines (as opposed to Hamas, which advocates an Islamic state), they were nonetheless at odds on most other issues. Viewing disunity as detrimental to achieving their primary common goal of setting up an independent Palestinian state, they sought to cooperate wherever possible and, in cases where they

⁵⁶⁶ On January 19, 1993, the Knesset annulled a provision of Israel's Anti-Terror Law, enacted in 1986, forbidding Israelis from meeting with PLO members. See "Israeli Parliament Overturns Ban on PLO Contacts," Chicago Tribune, January 20, 1993, p. 14. While individual Israelis were now able to meet with PLO officials, Israel still opposed any role for the organization in the Middle East peace negotiations (See "PLO Aide Hails Israel Legalising Contacts," Reuters, January 20, 1993) and continued to regard it as "... an illegal terrorist organisation under Israeli law." See H. Carnegie, "Israel Ends Ban on PLO Contacts," Financial Times, January 20, 1993 and "Israeli Embassy Justifies Expulsions," MTI Hungarian News Agency, January 20, 1993.

disagreed, to at least maintain a working relationship with one another despite their differences.

D. Fatah's Flexibility versus the PFLP's Strict Adherence to Doctrine

As shown earlier, the PFLP and Fatah adopted markedly different approaches to achieving their common aim of establishing an independent Palestinian state. The PFLP's emphasis on ideological integrity over actual progress in reaching its goals stood in sharp contrast to Fatah's ability to modify its strategies to fit changing circumstances and in order to achieve positive results. While the PFLP's approach was to demand power from the PLO leadership - and then, after receiving an unsatisfactory reply, to complain loudly of unfair treatment - Fatah's approach has been to amass power and influence through persuasion, deal-making, and immediate exploitation of opportunities.⁵⁶⁷

Fatah's flexible style long ago transformed it into the PLO's ". . . dominant ruling party," while the doctrinaire PFLP assumed the role of the 'loyal opposition.'⁵⁶⁸ It is Fatah ". .

⁵⁶⁷ M. Shemesh, The Palestinian Entity 1959-1974: Arab Politics and the PLO (London: Frank Cass, 1988) (hereinafter "Shemesh"), p. 154.

⁵⁶⁸ The ability to provide social services to its constituents has also been a key factor in determining the degree of support which Fatah - as the PLO's dominant force - enjoys among Palestinians. While no Fatah official would be foolish enough to state openly that his organization provides social services to Palestinians in order to 'buy their support', most political organizations (Palestinian or not) are known to administer social welfare programs for just that purpose. The PLO's social welfare system's apparent goal, however, has been to (continued...)

⁵⁶⁸ (...continued)

provide an alternative source of benefits for Palestinians, who may not, as a result of discrimination by the governments of the countries in which they reside, be receiving equal access to services. (See Mussalam, p. 34; L. Brand, Palestinians in the Arab World: Institution Building and the Search for State (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 3-4.)

The PLO's ability to provide services to its constituents, of course, required financial support. Such assistance was forthcoming - particularly from the Persian Gulf Arab states - with whom the PLO maintained friendly ties. It was abruptly halted, however, in the wake of the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, due to the PLO's open approval of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. (See D. Evans, "Palestinian Police Urgently Need More Funds," Reuters, May 5, 1994.)

The degree to which the PLO's constituency decreased as a result remains unclear. Financial solvency and the ability to provide social services were two of many other factors affecting the PLO's popularity, not the least of which were its quasi-governmental status and its reputation as the 'sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people'. The PLO's sudden destitution, however, had an obvious negative effect on its capacity to function to the extent that it was unable, by 1993, even to pay the salaries of its administrative staff. (See D. Evans, Reuters, May 5, 1994, op. cit.; "Another Israeli Murdered by Palestinian," ABC World News Tonight, April 7, 1994, 6:30 pm, Transcript No. 4069).

Hamas, on the other hand, having emulated Fatah's earlier policy, remained neutral during the Gulf War. It was thus able to maintain its reputation among Palestinians as a legitimate revolutionary organization, while simultaneously not offending its Saudi benefactors. As a result, Hamas was able to continue to receive substantial monetary assistance from the conservative Persian Gulf states while Fatah's aid was cut off. (See J. Legrain, "A Defining Moment: Palestinian Islamic Fundamentalism," in J. Piscatori, ed., Islamic Fundamentalisms and the Gulf Crisis (Chicago, Illinois: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1991), pp. 70-84.).

Whether Hamas' increase in popularity (as indicated by its increased representation in certain Palestinian trade associations and labor unions in the West bank and Gaza Strip) in the early 1990's was the direct consequence of Fatah's financial troubles is not apparent, but one may assume that a lack of funds to support its activities was a factor. Hamas continued access to financial aid clearly allowed it to continue its activities
(continued...)

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unabated and was able to make significant political gains at Fatah's expense (as demonstrated by its increased representation on the councils of certain Palestinian trade associations in the West Bank and Gaza. There were other factors, as well. Hamas had a clear, unchanging goal based upon a centuries-old religious doctrine that was readily understood by the common man: Israel's replacement by an Islamic state. The Fatah-dominated PLO had tacitly accepted Israel's right to exist towards the end of 1988 in its 'declaration of independence' and in 1991, was conducting indirect negotiations with Israel. The PLO's apparent vacillation (as opposed to Hamas' stubborn adherence to doctrine) could not have been conducive to improving its image among Palestinians.

The PLO's signing of the self-rule agreement with Israel in May 1994, however, was clearly motivated primarily by a desire to improve the economic lot of the Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, since the organization's political gains were minuscule. The entity which the PLO was to administer was far from being independent; nearly all major Palestinian policy decisions had to be coordinated with the Israeli government. In terms of territory, the entity's boundaries (the Gaza Strip [excluding areas of Jewish settlement] and the city of Jericho on the West Bank) were far smaller than those specified in the PLO's opening negotiating position (the entire West Bank, the entire Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem).

The Palestinian administration, however, was expected to receive billions of dollars in foreign aid, which it intended to invest in the local economy and infrastructure. At the same time, the PLO would continue its negotiations with Israel in order to determine the territories' final status, at the end of which it hoped to attain full sovereignty over them. The interim period would be probationary, during which the PLO would demonstrate its ability to maintain internal security, live at peace with its Israeli neighbor, and, most importantly, stimulate the area's economic development.

In this case, at least, the PLO's success in winning the loyalty of the majority of Palestinians is directly tied to its continued access to financial aid, which would enable it to maintain the Palestinian entity's infrastructure, maintain internal order, and develop the local economy. A successful autonomous administration would allay Israeli fears that any future Palestinian state would be unstable and hostile. If the PLO can bring about full Palestinian independence and economic contentment, it will have succeeded in winning the loyalty of most of the area's Palestinian residents and will have greatly reduced the appeal of the groups opposed to the peace process.

. which, in consultation with other organizations and politically active members of the Palestinian community, decides to a large extent the political guidelines to be followed by the PLO."⁵⁶⁹

E. Groups Challenging Fatah's Dominance are Quickly Marginalized

Groups attempting to challenge Fatah's dominance have either been marginalized within the PLO or compelled to leave the umbrella organization. 'Arafat aide Dr. Sami Mussalam has written that the opposition's differences with Fatah

are occasionally severe enough to prompt the opposition parties to suspend their membership or to refuse participation in forming the Executive Committee. Additionally, there is an extra-parliamentary opposition composed of extremist elements, whose objectives are hidden behind radical, nationalist terminology. This extra-parliamentary opposition is not officially recognized by the PLO and constitutes the fringe groups which were responsible for the fall [sic] 1983 inter-Palestinian conflict in Lebanon.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁹ Mussalam, p. 8. The degree to which Fatah dominates the PLO is most graphically illustrated in the 1984 edition of the Palestinian Encyclopedia, which states that "[a]s for those Arab countries which did not recognize the PLO [in 1970], such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Fatah carried out the mission of the PLO bureau as well."

Palestinian Encyclopedia - Fatah, p. 209.

⁵⁷⁰ This refers to the revolt led by Sa'id Musa Muraghah (Abu Musa), between May and December 1983, in which his organization of Fatah dissidents - Fatah-the Uprising - together with other pro-Syrian Palestinian groups drove the pro-'Arafat forces out of northern Lebanon. The dissidents were opposed to the PLO's strategy of supplementing armed confrontation against Israel with diplomacy. They sought to restore the PLO to being an organization which relied solely on violent action. The dissidents disputed in particular the PLO's acceptance in 1974 of the notion of 'liberating Palestine in stages', which called for the establishment of a Palestinian authority on any territory wrested from Israeli control, whether diplomatically or by armed force. They rejected this notion and called for a return to the idea of armed struggle as the only permissible means to 'liberate' (continued...)

They are without question extremist and against the democratically elected and legitimate leadership of the PLO.⁵⁷¹

Prior to the start of the Israeli-PLO negotiations, the PFLP could be described as a vocal minority PLO constituent group and its differences with the dominant Fatah organization are often acute. Nevertheless, it always viewed the PLO as the Palestinians' 'sole legitimate' representative and quasi-governmental body. In past cases of seemingly irreconcilable differences with 'Arafat, the PFLP temporarily withdrew its representation from one or more of the organization's authoritative bodies (usually the PNC or the Executive Committee), forming its own organizational blocs in an attempt to

⁵⁷⁰ (...continued)

Palestine.' The dissidents received the support of Syria, which sought to create a more militant alternative to the PLO led by 'Arafat. In rebelling against the traditional Fatah establishment, the dissidents sought to inspire Palestinians in general to transfer their support to the new organization. This effort failed miserably. While the dissidents managed to entice a number of senior Fatah officers into joining their faction, they were unable to win the support of a single political figure. Although the PFLP also opposed many of 'Arafat's positions, it refrained from siding with the dissident coalition against the PLO chairman, whom it viewed as a national symbol. In addition, the PFLP felt that the split within Fatah would provide 'Arafat with the 'shock treatment' it believed that he needed to prompt him to restore the PLO to its former militancy.

See Bekhor, pp. 216-221. See also A. 'Abd al-Rahman, "Al-Nidhal al-Filastini fi Itar Munadhdhamah al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Struggle Within the PLO Framework], " Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah [The Palestinian Encyclopedia], Vol. V (Beirut: Hai'ah al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah, 1990) (hereinafter "'Abd al-Rahman), pp. 246-251.

⁵⁷¹ Mussalam, p. 9.

counter a particular trend.⁵⁷² However, it never disputed the PLO's legitimacy or usefulness, and justified these steps as attempts to ". . . returning the PLO to the national line as spelled out in legitimate PNC sessions."⁵⁷³ Even after its effective withdrawal in 1993, the PFLP reaffirmed the PLO's role as the Palestinian people's representative, but added that 'Arafat's leadership no longer reflected the umbrella organization's true aims.⁵⁷⁴

The PFLP's criticism of the Fatah-dominated leadership has traditionally focused on: 1) its own relatively limited representation within the PLO and the need to rectify this condition; 2) the means of struggle to be employed against Israel; and 3) the question of whether or not to accept the reality of Israel's existence.

⁵⁷² In the autumn of 1974, the PFLP formed the Rejection Front. The Rejection Front was composed of organizations opposed to a resolution adopted by the Twelfth PNC which permitted the PLO to establish a Palestinian state (albeit temporarily) ". . . on every part of Palestine to be liberated . . . , " a solution which they believed would postpone Israel's destruction indefinitely. See Cobban, p. 62. The PFLP formed the Palestinian National Salvation Front in 1984 because it disapproved of Arafat's seemingly close relationship with Jordan and indirectly, it believed, with Israel. See Wallach and Wallach, p. 242. Following the start of the Israel-PLO negotiations in September 1993, the PFLP effectively withdrew from the PLO to form the Alliance of Palestinian Forces (composed of Islamic fundamentalist, as well as secular Marxist groups. See Chapter 2).

⁵⁷³ "Interview with Comrade Habash," Democratic Palestine, No. 13 (January 1986), p. 7.

⁵⁷⁴ "PLO Radicals Plan New Leadership to Replace Arafat," Reuters, October 7, 1993.

Since 1968, the PFLP has sought to extend its influence within the PLO umbrella group. Despite 'Arafat's claim that the PLO is a democratic organization which represents all Palestinians,⁵⁷⁵ both Fatah and PFLP sources make it clear that it is Fatah (and principally 'Arafat) which determines the proportion at which the PLO's various constituent groups are represented within its governing bodies. Mussalam, for example, has written that ". . . Fateh is by far the largest and most powerful party among the various Palestinian organizations which comprise the PLO - and could at any time easily form and control the Executive Committee" Although he downplays Fatah's role as 'political orchestrator' by emphasizing that since 1969, it has ". . . opted for the formation of a coalition form of government . . . ," he nevertheless does not attempt to hide the fact that Fatah ". . . has assigned itself three of the 15 portfolios of the Executive Committee. These portfolios are the chairmanship of the Executive Committee, the Political Department and the Department of National Relations." Despite Fatah's control of the organization's three key positions, Mussalam

⁵⁷⁵ See, e.g. an 'Arafat speech on the occasion of the 'Uprising's' fifth anniversary, reported by Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic, 1702 gmt, December 10, 1992 in FBIS-NES-92-239, December 11, 1992, p. 7, in which he ". . . emphasized that we went to the negotiations out of conviction. We will continue to do so with conviction and will boycott them out of conviction because our Palestinian decision is a free one, and stems from the decisions made by the Palestinian National Council." (Emphasis added).

continues to maintain that Fatah ". . . does not endeavor to dominate the PLO."⁵⁷⁶

F. Alliances of Convenience

Through September 1993, the PFLP favored - at least at the highest levels - cooperation with Fatah in matters on which the two organizations agree and responsible opposition to it on issues on which they disagree. The 1983 version of the PFLP's Political and Organizational Strategy stated that:

[t]he law which governs our relations with this class is the alliance between it and the revolution to stand in the face of the fundamental contradiction, represented by the enemy camp . . . and at the same time, oppose this class so that it, its programs, and its strategy do not become part of the revolution's leadership.⁵⁷⁷

More recently, in 1992, PFLP Secretary General George Habash referred to his organization's relationship with the PLO as one which was governed by ". . . the law of unity and struggle." "Our position toward the PLO," Habash explained, ". . . could first of all be defined in light of the political stand. If we agree on this stand, we will encourage the process of alliance. But if we differ with this stand, we will say so."⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁶ Mussalam, p. 9.

⁵⁷⁷ Strategy 1983, p. 67.

⁵⁷⁸ M. Sukkariyah, "Hiwar ma' Jurj Habash . . . Al-Halim al-Rafidh tadhakkara 'abd al-Nasir wa Baka al-Qutriyyah al-Filastiniyyah Sabab Ra'isi fi Azmat al-Nidhal [An Interview with George Habash . . . 'Abd al-Nasir is Remembered as a Rejectionist Dreamer and the Wailing of Palestinian Regionalism is a Major Reason for the Crisis in the Struggle]," Al-Safir, June 8, 1992, p. 3.

In 1992, PFLP cooperated with Fatah against efforts in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) to compete with the PLO's secular nationalist leadership for control of the Palestinian political movement (see above). The PFLP regarded Hamas's aim of establishing an Islamic state as dangerously contradictory to its vision of a 'secular, democratic' Palestine - dangerous for non-Muslim Palestinians in particular.⁵⁷⁹ The concern of the Palestinian movement's secular wing over Hamas' approach - as well as the political challenge which it represents - has been reinforced by the violent clashes which have taken place between Hamas and PLO supporters in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In 1991, for example, a Palestinian journalist reported that Hamas operatives in Nablus ". . . captured a [PLO] activist wanted by the Israeli

⁵⁷⁹ Democratic Palestine warned that:

. . . Hamas could serve to distort the image of the intifada and the Palestinian national movement in the eyes of the world. To further illustrate the real face of Hamas, it is sufficient to point to some of Hamas' seemingly silly but actually dangerous mottos, like: "the Quran is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." Another slogan, "After Saturday comes Sunday," could be understood as an indication that after finishing with the Jews, Hamas will turn to the Christians. How can such mottos serve the Palestinian struggle?"

"The Islamic Fundamentalist Movement in Palestine: Focus on Hamas," Democratic Palestine, No. 51, July - August - September 1992, p. 15.

army for more than three years, stabbed him 17 times, then left him bleeding in the street."⁵⁸⁰

The PFLP's fear of an Islamic fundamentalist take-over of the Palestinian national movement led it to form political alliances of convenience with Fatah against Hamas in trade union, professional organization, and student group elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In November 1992, for example, Reuters reported that Fatah, the PFLP, and the DFLP had joined forces to defeat the Hamas candidates in an election to the student council of Bir Zait University - in which the PLO bloc won 66% of the vote - stressing that ". . . [t]hree PLO factions put aside differences on Middle East peace talks to block the election of Moslem fundamentalists to the student council of a key West Bank university"⁵⁸¹

⁵⁸⁰ E. Fraitekh, "Intifada: Now the War Among the Palestinians. The Secular-Fundamentalist Schism on the West Bank," Washington Post, November 24, 1991, p. C2.

⁵⁸¹ "PLO Unites to Block Fundamentalists at University," Reuters, November 12, 1992. Hamas competes with the PLO in the social services area as well. The Economist reports that the fundamentalist organization ". . . runs an efficient network of welfare institutions. . . ." in the territories (See "Islam Versus Israel," Economist, December 19, 1992, p. 47; B. Hepburn, "HAMAS Militant Islamic Fundamentalist Movement Has Become More Violent and Popular Among Palestinians than Israel Ever Imagined," Toronto Star, January 3, 1993, p. F1; and Y. Ibrahim, "Arabs to Seek U.N. Pressure on Israel Over Deportations," New York Times, January 13, 1993, p. A2) and maintains that Hamas's activities are funded by the Saudi and Iranian governments, as well as by contributions from supporters world-wide. See I. Black, "Israel: Hamas Fills PLO Vacuum," Guardian, December 18, 1992, p. 8 and P. Inbari, "Cooperation of Convenience," Jerusalem Post, December 25, 1992. The Israeli government has made similar accusations. See C. Walker, "PLO Fears Rise of Fundamentalists," Times, December 18, 1992; IDF Radio, 1700 gmt, December 22, 1992 (continued...)

In this case, the PFLP united with Fatah in order to respond to Hamas' challenge, which they each saw as a threat to their very existence. In cases where differences on important doctrinal questions⁵⁸² - such as Palestinian participation in

⁵⁸¹ (...continued)

in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, December 24, 1992, p. ME/1572/A/1; J. Ferziger, "Israel Accuses Saudi Arabia of Funding Hamas," UPI, January 11, 1993; and "Administration asked to Help Cut Flow of Hamas Funds from US to Territories," Jerusalem Post, January 11, 1993.

⁵⁸² An example of an important doctrinal question on which the two organizations disagree is whether or not one should openly call for Israel's destruction. As stated earlier in this chapter, the PFLP is generally very forthright on this issue and consistently avers that Israel's disappearance is a prerequisite to the Arab-Israeli conflict's peaceful resolution. Fatah, on the other hand, is not averse to appearing moderate in order to achieve tangible results or to enhance its image.

In May 1989, for example, Yasir 'Arafat declared that the Palestinian National Charter had been "superseded" in order to assuage western fears that the PLO still sought Israel's destruction. "Arafat Visits France: Declares PLO Charter 'Superseded'," Facts on File World News Digest, May 5, 1989, p. 314 F1. Although the PLO later disavowed 'Arafat's statement (Kuwait KUNA in Arabic, 1325 gmt, May 6, 1989 in FBIS-NES-89-087, May 8, 1989, p. 3), George Habash nevertheless demanded that he relinquish his chairmanship:

I state clearly that if Arafat has reached the point where he considers the PLO covenant to be null and void, he should look for another organization, because the masses have embraced the PLO and its covenant and tens of thousands of martyrs, for whom we are responsible, have died under the PLO and we will never betray the blood of our martyrs, the blood of (Abu Jihad), Wadi' Haddad, Guevara Gaza, Ghassan Kanafani, and the blood of tens of thousands of heroic martyrs who died under the banner of the PLO and its covenant .

. . . .

"Habash fi Muqabalah ma' Roitir hawla Mawdhu' al-Mithaq al-Watani: Sanunadhilu dakhil al-Mu'assasat wa fi Itar Jamahirina li Fardh al-Mawqif al-Sahih [Habash in an Interview with Reuters: We will Struggle within the Institutions and in the Framework of our (continued...)]

the peace process currently taking place between Israel and its Arab neighbors - the PFLP attacked Fatah's position favoring participation.⁵⁸³

Habash recently criticized the PLO leadership for ". . . calling for pragmatism and saying that the Arab and international conditions are forcing us to enter into this process," and called for working to ". . . protect and continue the intifadah in preparation for escalating it." When reminded that the

⁵⁸² (...continued)

Masses to Impose the Correct Stance], " Al-Hadaf, No. 959, May 31, 1989, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁸³ In late 1991, for example, George Habash severely criticized the PLO leadership for backing Palestinian participation in the Madrid peace conference and called for a less pacific means of confronting Israel:

I regret to say that we have started negotiations while settlement building continues. Therefore, it is the duty of the PLO to change its current course very quickly and to lead the masses down the road of struggle in order to change the balance of power. I regret to say that some leaders are celebrating their own defeats. Well, I could sympathise with someone who says ["This is a difficult situation, a terrible situation, into which we were forced against our will, etc. But, really, to celebrate our defeats, this is a situation that I hope some leaders would reconsider.["]

"Text of Recording of 'Exclusive' Statement by Dr. George Habash, Secretary-General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] to MBC Correspondent Sa'd al-Silawi in Amman," date not given, in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, November 18, 1991, p. ME/1232/A/1 (emphasis added).

Habash indicated that his criticism was directed at Fatah when he declared, on November 6, 1991, that ". . . we cannot bear responsibility for the wrong policy adopted by the dominant leadership . . ." of the PLO, referring to the organization's support for the Madrid talks.

"PFLP Quits PLO in PLO Executive Committee," Xinhua General Overseas News Service, November 6, 1991, Item 1106017.

uprising's violent aspects had achieved few practical gains, Habash countered with his familiar advocacy of the 'long-term popular liberation war', asserting that ". . . we want to struggle for one year, two years, a thousand years. What is important is to obtain our liberty."⁵⁸⁴

On this critical issue at least, the PFLP was prepared to temporarily collaborate even with the rival Palestinian organizations which it feared most - Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad - based on a common opposition to Palestinian participation in U.S.-sponsored negotiations with Israel. The aim, according to Habash ". . . is to make the American plan fail. Then the United Nations will have to deal with the Palestinian issue. When that happens, world opinion will support us, not Jihad² or Hamas."⁵⁸⁵

G. The Limits of Compromise

As demonstrated earlier, the PFLP does not reject the principle of a negotiated solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, but rather, opposes a settlement in which accepts of any kind of coexistence with the Israel and in which its aim to destroy Israel is either postponed or foregone.⁵⁸⁶ Its response to the Palestinian delegation's participation in the 1991 Madrid peace talks was to remain within the PLO framework, while continually

⁵⁸⁴ Al-Safir, June 8, 1992.

⁵⁸⁵ P. Eedle, "PFLP Leader Habash Condemns Peace Process as Trap," Reuters, January 25, 1993.

⁵⁸⁶ Al-Hadaf, No. 936, November 20, 1988, pp. 7-10.

reminding the organization of the absence of concrete positive results and calling for Palestinian withdrawal from the negotiations.⁵⁸⁷ The PLO's entry into direct negotiations with Israel however, violated the PFLP's most fundamental principle of neither recognizing nor dealing with the enemy. This prompted it to leave the umbrella organization to form an 'alternative PLO' in the form of the Alliance of Palestinian Organizations, incorporating both secular and Islamic Palestinian groups opposed to peace negotiations with Israel (see chapter 2).

H. The Method to 'Arafat's 'Madness'

The PLO's 'dealings with the enemy', however, were aimed at accomplishing many of the goals that the PFLP contends were conceded in the May 1994 self-rule agreement; namely, the attainment of a de facto status for Jerusalem as the administrative seat for Palestinian political affairs in Jericho and the Gaza Strip and, by logical extension, the remainder of the West Bank. They present, once again, an opportunity to contrast the PFLP's insistence on strict doctrinal adherence with the Fatah leadership's predilection for exploiting existing conditions to the greatest possible advantage.

The Israel-PLO peace agreement gave the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) jurisdiction over most of the Gaza Strip and

⁵⁸⁷ See, e.g. "PFLP Calls for Withdrawal from Peace Talks Following 'Atrocities' in Gaza," Al-Ouds Palestinian Arab Radio, 1730 gmt, December 13, 1992 in British Broadcasting Corporation: Summary of World Broadcasts, December 15, 1992, p. ME/1564/A/1; "Palestinian Radicals Condemn Israeli Measures," Reuters, December 15, 1992.

Jericho. Despite the PLO's initial acceptance of these conditions, it continued to insist that the issue of eventual Palestinian control of East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank was far from dead and, as stipulated in the DOP, would be taken up once more within three years of the agreement's signing.

In the interim, both parties expressed fears that the other was attempting to create irrevocable facts on the ground to preclude further negotiations. On May 10, shortly after the signing of the peace agreement, 'Arafat addressed congregants at a mosque in Johannesburg, South Africa during which he warned that the Israelis would exploit the three year period to weaken the Palestinian presence in Jerusalem and strengthen their own. He called upon his audience to ". . . come to fight, to begin the jihad to liberate Jerusalem, your first shrine" and charged that there was ". . . a constant conspiracy against Jerusalem [I]n the next three years, (negotiations) will start no later than the beginning of the third year. They (the Israelis) will try to wipe out and change the demography of Jerusalem." This was the reason, 'Arafat asserted, for his insistence on an Israeli guarantee that existing Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem would not be disturbed before he would sign an agreement with the Israeli government. The Israelis, he further maintained, had outlined these guarantees in a letter given to him in Cairo in which ". . . I insisted that they

mention that we are responsible for all the holy sites, Christian and Muslim."⁵⁸⁸

'Arafat's Johannesburg speech triggered an alarm in the editorial and opinion sections of Israel's major daily newspapers; not so much over 'Arafat's call for jihad,⁵⁸⁹ as over the possibility that the Israeli government might have made commitments to the PLO which would compromise Israeli sovereignty in what was considered ". . . Israel's eternal capital."⁵⁹⁰ Israeli Foreign Minister Peres responded that no such letter was given to 'Arafat in Cairo and that he was probably referring to the Israeli letter sent to Norwegian mediator Johan Holst in which Israel undertook to preserve all existing Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem and to respect the religious rights of all. There was no commitment by Israel, he explained, to allow the PLO to extend its authority beyond what was outlined in the peace agreement and DOP.⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁸ Ha'aretz in Hebrew, May 23, 1994, p. A2 in FBIS-NESA-94-100, May 24, 1994, pp. 1-3.

⁵⁸⁹ The term jihad, or 'holy war', refers to a military campaign against non-Muslim forces in order to further or protect the Islamic community's interests. See H. Wehr, A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic (Arabic-English) (edited by J.M. Cowan) (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1979), p. 169. It was generally agreed, however, that the PLO did not have the resources for such an undertaking and only the agreement's staunchest Israeli opponents made an issue of 'Arafat's unfortunate remark.

⁵⁹⁰ Yedi'ot Aharonot, June 8, 1994, p. 2 in FBIS-NES-94-111, June 9, 1994, pp. 34-35.

⁵⁹¹ Interview with Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres, Israel Television Channel 1 Network, 1530 gmt, June 9, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-112, June 10, 1994, pp. 30-34. See also Jerusalem, (continued...)

Concurrent press accounts, however, indicated that this was precisely what the PLO was attempting. The preeminent 'existing Palestinian institution' in Jerusalem was Orient House, built on the property of Palestinian negotiator Faisal al-Husseini, and housing his Arab Studies Center until 1988. Closed down by the Israelis during that year for its role during the uprising as a front for PLO activities in Jerusalem,⁵⁹² it was re-opened in 1992 to serve as the headquarters of the Palestinian delegation to the Madrid formula autonomy negotiations,⁵⁹³ at which they held news conferences and working sessions, and through which all fax and telephone communications with the PLO in Tunis were conducted. The Palestinian technical committees, which had been assembled to plan the infrastructure for autonomy arrangement envisioned under the Madrid formula, held their meetings there

⁵⁹¹ (...continued)

Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew, 1800 gmt, June 6, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-109, p. 54; "Economical With the Truth," Economist, June 18, 1994, pp. 48 and 51.

⁵⁹² Two additional offices, located in the Wadi al-Jawz and Shu'afat neighborhoods, were closed down by the Israeli government in February 1991 for similar reasons. A. Cohen, "Two of Hussaini's Offices Closed by Security Police," Jerusalem Post, February 25, 1991, p. 12. It acquiesced, however, to "... the basing of numerous Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem, most of them affiliated with the PLO, such as newspapers, press services and labor and social organizations." Y. Goell, "Rethinking the Jerusalem Status Quo," Jerusalem Post, February 27, 1991, p. 4.

⁵⁹³ S. Helm, "Opening Doors to the Past and the Future," Independent, August 1, 1992, p. 13. See also "Husseini's Arab Studies Center Reopens After Four Years," AFP, July 29, 1992.

and have since evolved into quasi-ministries for a shadow Palestinian government in East Jerusalem and the Territories.⁵⁹⁴

The 'ministries' were quickly staffed with secretaries, clerks, economists, and administrative and legal experts. Computers and telephone lines were also installed. An office to deal with foreign representatives was established and diplomats based in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, as well as foreign delegations from abroad, interacted with Palestinian elements from the West Bank and Gaza Strip through Orient House.

Since the signing of the DOP on September 13, 1993, the PLO has incrementally attempted to secure at least de facto international acceptance of East Jerusalem, rather than Jericho, as its seat of government.⁵⁹⁵ The Palestinian flag was raised on top of the roof of Orient House on the day of the signing. Shortly after the conclusion of the Gaza-Jericho autonomy agreement in May 1994, the Japanese foreign minister paid a visit to the building, during which the Palestinian and Japanese flags were flown side by side, ". . . in accordance with the rules of

⁵⁹⁴ R. Shaged, Yedi'ot Aharonot (Leshabat Supplement), June 10, 1994, pp. 7 and 26 in FBIS-NES-94-121, June 23, 1994, (hereinafter "Shaged"), pp. 5-8.

⁵⁹⁵ Amid speculation over whether the DOP would indeed be signed, 'Arafat made no secret of his intention to press on in demanding full Palestinian control over the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. See, e.g. "'Arafat yubashshiru al-Sha'b al-Filastini fi Khitab Mu'aththir bi al-Hatif min Tunis: Nahnu Qadimun al-Dawlah al-Filastiniyyah 'Asimatiha al-Quds Qaribah ['Arafat Announces to the Palestinian People in a Moving Speech by Telephone From Tunis: We are Advancing and the Palestinian State, Whose Capital is Jerusalem, is at Hand]," 'Uman, September 2, 1993, pp. 1, 17.

diplomatic etiquette." This was quickly followed by the arrival of a Turkish parliamentary delegation and at the beginning of June, a joint cooperation agreement was signed there between France and the PNA.⁵⁹⁶

Towards the end of May, reports began to appear in the Israeli press that the PNA was indeed attempting to set up a shadow government at Orient House, citing the establishment there of a Statistics Bureau for the autonomous region and the planned creation of an economic commission to receive and disburse the financial aid provided by the donor countries to the Palestinian entity.⁵⁹⁷ The Jordanian daily, Al-Dustur quoted an unnamed PNA official as saying that the shadow government would ". . . comprise several ministries, including 'social affairs, housing, tourism and antiquities, education, sports and youth, health, and awqaf [Islamic religious edicts]' in addition to any other ministries the PNA thinks are necessary to consolidate the Palestinian presence in the city." According to the official, these measures were aimed at preventing "' . . . the Israeli government from changing the status quo of the city to weaken the Palestinian negotiating stance' before starting the final

⁵⁹⁶ Shaged.

⁵⁹⁷ Jerusalem, New Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew, 1700 gmt, May 28, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-104, May 31, 1994, pp. 68-69.

negotiations that will determine the fate of the city . . .

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While Faisal al-Husseini and others denied that such a government currently existed,⁵⁹⁹ they nevertheless maintained that it was their intention to eventually form one. In an interview with the Jerusalem daily Al-Nahar, Hussein stated that:

[t]he battle of Jerusalem is a political, diplomatic, social, educational, and cultural battle. On the political and diplomatic levels, we are doing our best. This place, the Orient House, is one of the areas that has made a great effort toward that end. I believe that we gained a preliminary presence. This place has turned into a meeting place for the Palestinians with foreigners as well as among the Palestinians themselves to discuss several internal issues. At the economic level, this center has endeavored to call for an economic workshop on Jerusalem, and I believe that we must convene such a conference in Jerusalem as soon as possible to send a message to the Israelis that Jerusalem's importance is not just religious. The Israelis must realize that this is the Palestinians' religious, political, economic, and educational capital."⁶⁰⁰

The Israeli government's response was to insist, in discussions with Hussein and his colleagues, that the PLO abide

⁵⁹⁸ Al-Dustur, June 9, 1994, p. 29 in FBIS-NES-94-111, June 9, 1994, pp. 3-4.

⁵⁹⁹ See, e.g. Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew, 1800 gmt, June 7, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-110, June 8, 1994, p. 8; Jerusalem Ool Yisra'el in Hebrew, 0705 gmt, June 7, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-109, June 7, 1994, pp. 11-12.

⁶⁰⁰ 'A. Arna'ut, Interview with Faisal al-Hussaini, Al-Nahar, June 3, 1994, pp. 1,8 in FBIS-NES-94-108, June 6, 1994, pp. 6-8. Hussaini later told Al-Sharq al-Awsat that "East Jerusalem is the capital of the Palestinian state." M. Abu-'Id, Interview with Faisal al-Hussaini, Al-Sharq al-Awsat, June 25, 1994, p. 6 in FBIS-NES-94-123, June 27, 1994, p. 9.

by its agreement with Israel to administer PNA affairs from Jericho and the Gaza Strip only and to refrain from establishing and operating political institutions in Jerusalem. Rabin instructed the Israeli Police and internal security agencies to closely monitor Orient House and to immediately put a stop to any activities detected there which violate the PLO's May 1994 agreement with Israel, particularly law enforcement.⁶⁰¹

Despite its apparent determination to halt the extension of Palestinian political authority to East Jerusalem, the Israeli government will be hard-pressed to achieve final success without risking unwanted attention and negative world reaction. Any government attempt to close down Palestinian institutions or arrest their employees would be well-covered by the mass media, potentially damaging Israel's rising status in the international

⁶⁰¹ M. Einstein Interview with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, Jerusalem, Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew, 0405 gmt, June 9, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-111, June 9, 1994, pp. 33-34. See also A. Ben, Ha'aretz, June 20, 1994, p. A1 in FBIS-NES-94-118, June 20, 1994, p. 1. Environmental Affairs Minister Yossi Sarid, a leftist member of Rabin's cabinet, echoed the prime minister's response in no uncertain terms:

One, that institutions of the Palestinian self-rule authority will be in the Gaza Strip or the Jericho area, and only there. Two, any organizational activity that is diplomatic or resembles diplomatic activity that relates to Palestinian rule or resembles it in Jerusalem will require the endorsement of Israeli authorities, and each case will be examined by Israel based on the accord with the PLO. And three, there is only one police force in Jerusalem - Israeli, not Palestinian, and security and public order in Jerusalem is the responsibility of the Israeli police force, no other.

Jerusalem, Qol Yisra'el in English, 1000 gmt, June 1, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-105, June 1, 1994, p. 44.

community and endangering the economic benefits connected therewith. Moreover, according to M. Peleg of Ha'aretz, there already exists a de facto social, economic, and political separation between the Jerusalem's Arab and Jewish sectors, a factor which tends to support Palestinian statements on their need for separate institutions and would will make it difficult for the Israeli government to assert control over Arab neighborhoods beyond mere political sovereignty.⁶⁰² M. Benvenisti, former Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem, develops this argument further by contending that like the Jewish Agency and Histadrut Labor Federation of Israel's pre-statehood days, Orient House and its satellite institutions form the nucleus of a nascent sovereign government whose emergence into legitimate existence is inevitable.⁶⁰³

The Rabin government, however, if it is seen to be losing control over Jerusalem (for millenia, the focus of Jewish nationalist and religious aspirations), would be endangering its existence and must weigh these risks against the possibility of a much stronger domestic popular backlash. This has moved it to reiterate its commitment to a united Jerusalem under Israeli

⁶⁰² The most conspicuous example of the disconnection of the city's Arab and Jewish sectors are the separate electrical power grids which serve them, with the Israeli Electrical Corporation supplying Jewish neighborhoods and the East Jerusalem Electricity Company supplying Arab neighborhoods. See Summary of report by M. Peleg in Ha'aretz, June 3, 1994, pp. 36-38, 40 in FBIS-NES-94-111, June 9, 1994, pp. 35-36.

⁶⁰³ M. Benvenisti, "Jericho is No Substitute," Ha'aretz in Hebrew, June 16, 1994, p. B1 in FBIS-NES-94-129, June 22, 1994, pp. 34-35.

sovereignty and to warn the PLO against administering the PNA from Orient House.⁶⁰⁴

The PLO, for the time being, is taking these warnings seriously and avoiding public statements - to the Israeli press, at least - which might antagonize the government.⁶⁰⁵ Its response has been to deny that such activities are taking place while quietly continuing them.⁶⁰⁶ The Israel-PLO negotiating process continues, however. Their focus this time will be on the extension of Palestinian authority to the remainder of the West Bank. The PLO hopes, in time, to secure Israeli recognition of East Jerusalem as the PNA's capital. Israel has accepted in principle the expansion of the area under the Palestinian

⁶⁰⁴ Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el, 0800 gmt, July 12, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-133, July 12, 1994, p. 34.

⁶⁰⁵ Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic, 0510 gmt, June 21, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-119, June 21, 1994, pp. 2-3. Among the factors behind the PLO's decision to lower its profile in Jerusalem was the arrest by the Israeli authorities of "... a number of East Jerusalem residents who attempted to set up a Palestinian police framework in the city." See A. Ben and G. Alon, Ha'aretz, June 26, 1994, p. A4 in FBIS-NES-94-123, June 27, 1994, p. 52. 'Arafat's political advisor, Nabil Sha'th, stated in an interview with Israeli television that the PLO would gain political control over East Jerusalem only through a negotiated agreement with the Israeli government. See Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew, 1800 gmt, June 20, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-119, June 21, 1994, p. 2.

⁶⁰⁶ M. Amir reporting on Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew, 0405 gmt, July 12, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-133, July 12, 1994, p. 2. See also N. Sandler, Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English, 1500 gmt, July 12, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-134, July 13, 1994, p. 35.

authority's control, but rejected its political claims on Jerusalem.⁶⁰⁷

As the second stage of negotiations begins, Israel and the PLO each hold trump cards to check the other's ambitions. Whether Israel cedes the entire West Bank to the PNA or only portions thereof may depend on the extent to which the PLO presses the Jerusalem issue, and vice versa. In the final analysis, however, Israel can only make concessions (in terms of territory and sovereignty), while the PLO can only gain (in the same terms). The PLO can gradually and patiently transform Jerusalem into the PNA's effective capital city through imperceptible and incremental infractions of its agreement with Israel.

As the next phase of the Israeli-Palestinian discussions progresses, a skillful PNA leadership will likely maintain a low profile in Jerusalem, restricting its activity there to what has already been generally accepted as legitimate: unofficial meetings, the receiving of foreign diplomats and financial aid, the maintenance of a statistics bureau for the West Bank and Gaza Strip, etc. As the PNA assumes power in the rest of the West Bank, it can turn its attention to defying Israeli authority in East Jerusalem. While Israel can legitimately suppress such obvious symbols of Palestinian sovereignty as a police force, its taking action against what would appear to be social and economic

⁶⁰⁷ W. Drozdiak, "Arafat, Rabin Open Next Phase of Talks: Israel Urges Caution, PLO Sees Urgency," Washington Post, July 7, 1994, p. A12.

research institutions would be considered unacceptable behavior by the outside world and open it to political and economic sanctions.

Israel's response, so far, has been to continue the gradual strengthening of its presence in East Jerusalem by building new Jewish areas and expanding those which already exist. The outcome is likely to be a patchwork of Jewish and Arab neighborhoods, each with its own physical and economic infrastructure, and neither capable of dislodging the other.

The PNA's political entrenchment in Jerusalem, together with its enduring demand that the city's eastern half be the capital of a future Palestinian state, ensure that this issue will continue to confront Israel for years to come. In negotiating with Israel, the Palestinian authority, in order to succeed, must accustom its counterpart to the idea of making territorial and symbolic concessions. The Israel-PLO talks' current focus on extending PNA authority to the remainder of the West Bank⁶⁰⁸ is part of this process. Israel's attachment to East Jerusalem, however, makes it unlikely that the PNA will locate its capital there in any other manner except through stealth. In addition, the agreement which resulted from the Israeli-Jordanian rapprochement in July 1994 promises Jordan a greater role in

⁶⁰⁸ The Israeli government has suggested that this take the form of autonomous PNA enclaves in Palestinian population centers, with the roads connecting them to be jointly patrolled by Israeli and Palestinian security forces. R. Ben-Yishay, Yedi'ot Aharonot, July 10, 1994, pp. 1, 22 in FBIS-NES-94-132, July 11, 1994, p. 52. See also "Arafat, Rabin Pledge Cooperation on Self-Rule," Washington Post, August 11, 1994, p. A32.

administering Jerusalem's Muslim holy places,⁶⁰⁹ a prospect which 'Arafat views with alarm since this is a role which he has long coveted for the Palestinians.⁶¹⁰ Nevertheless, the PLO's practice of incremental encroachment has proven considerably more effective than the PFLP's 'all or nothing' approach.

Despite its opposition to the Israel-PLO negotiations, the PFLP will not likely want to be excluded from their outcome. Should the Palestinian entity envisioned in the DOP be established in the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip, the PFLP's local supporters will almost certainly wish to play a part in its government. In March 1994, Riyadh al-Maliki, the PFLP's unofficial spokesman in the territories doubted that "... the opposition cannot do [much] to boycott the agreement, especially since the 10 opposition groups have failed to form a real front against the accord. He said the Popular Front now needs to look ahead and define its new role under Palestinian self-rule."⁶¹¹ In April, meetings occurred between Fatah and PFLP representatives both in Tunis and in the Gaza Strip in order to reach an understanding between the groups ahead of the expected

⁶⁰⁹ E. Sciolino et. al., "Amid Debt, Doubt and Secrecy, Hussein and Rabin Made Peace," New York Times, July 31, 1994, pp. 1, 8.

⁶¹⁰ C. Murphy, "Israelis See Accord as Affirmation of Growing Acceptance in Arab World," Washington Post, July 26, 1994, p. A13. See also C. Murphy, "Arabs Feud Over Role of Jerusalem: Jordan's King, Arafat Dispute Roles in City," Washington Post, August 3, 1994, p. A23.

⁶¹¹ "Palestinian Groups agree Autonomy will come True," Xinhua General Overseas News Service, No. 0328197, March 28, 1994.

Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho. In Tunis, PFLP politburo member 'Abd al-Rahim Malluh requested a role for his organization both in the self-governing authority and in the security forces, indicating a measure of pragmatism at the group's highest levels.⁶¹²

At the same time, the PFLP's leadership outside the territories continues to attempt to build its coalition against the Palestinian authority and to work actively to undermine it. The PNA's establishment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, then, will provide the PFLP with the opportunity - should it choose to take exploit it - to re-enter mainstream Palestinian politics (and effectively, the PLO) without seeming to compromise its defiant patriotism.⁶¹³

⁶¹² See "Palestinian Factions meet Ahead of Self-Rule, " Reuters, April 23, 1994; S. Nasrawi, "Arafat Opponents seek Role in Self-Government," AP, April 21, 1994; 'A. Arna'ut, Al-Nahar (Jerusalem), April 24, 1994, pp. 1 and 7 in FBIS-NES-94-083, April 29, 1994, p. 10.

⁶¹³ At the end of May, 'Arafat met again in Tunis with PFLP and Hamas representatives, offering them positions in the Palestinian authority. They declined, although there was speculation that the PFLP would eventually be convinced to join. See S. Nasrawi, "Hamas Refuses to Join National Authority, New Member Named," AP, May 30, 1994; "PNA Members to 'Start Work on the Ground'," Reuters, May 29, 1994.

Part Four: Conclusion

This study has attempted to characterize the PFLP's role within the Palestinian national movement, as well as to suggest reasons for the organization's ever-growing marginalization from the Palestinian political mainstream. Because of its stubborn insistence - despite changing circumstances - on implementing a complex ideological program with highly ambitious goals, the PFLP has found itself increasingly unable to compete with the more influential Fatah, whose aims are far simpler and whose program is more flexible. Because PFLP doctrine does not permit it to adapt quickly to changing political circumstances, the organization has become increasingly marginalized in Palestinian and regional politics,⁶¹⁴ while Fatah has achieved nearly total dominance.

A. Fatah's Flexibility Widens Its Range of Choices

Fatah's sole aim has consistently been limited to the establishment of a Palestinian state; preferably in place of Israel, but if this is not possible, then alongside it. How the program's goals are accomplished is less important than its eventual success. Fatah's view permits it to accept aid from any source, ally itself with any party, and conclude agreements even with its former enemies.

⁶¹⁴ Hamas' ideology - fundamentalist Islam - is equally rigid, but has won greater appeal among Palestinians in general. Most were raised as Muslims and understand its precepts. In contrast, only a few, well-educated Palestinians have a sufficiently acute understanding of Marxism to be inspired by it.

This flexibility enabled Fatah to gain control of the PLO in February 1969 and remain at its head since. Fatah's leadership transformed the PLO from a marginal non-state regional actor into an international political force with the characteristics of a government-in-exile. In the years following the October 1973 war, the PLO - recognizing the futility of defeating Israel on the battlefield - shifted its emphasis from military to political activity. In 1974, it gained recognition in the Arab world as the Palestinians' 'sole legitimate representative' and was accorded full diplomatic status in Arab capitals. In that year as well, the PLO officially endorsed the concept of establishing a Palestinian state on any territory from which Israel might withdraw (ie., the West Bank and Gaza Strip), implying a readiness to coexist - for tactical reasons, at least - with its enemy. The PLO's apparent willingness to accept Israel's presence provided the basis for altering its negative reputation as a terrorist organization among western governments and laid the groundwork for its acceptance as a legitimate international actor. While it had formerly been perceived as a threat to international stability, the PLO was now increasingly regarded as the key to a comprehensive solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

With the aid of its allies in the Soviet bloc, the PLO was able to achieve observer status at the United Nations in 1974, giving it an official platform from which to present its case. For the first time in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Palestinians could claim victory over their Israeli

counterparts. As a result of the PLO's efforts - in conjunction with the Soviet bloc, Arab, and third world governments - the United Nations passed one resolution after another against its enemy, with Israel and the United States powerless to halt the trend. The PLO's rising international status led to full diplomatic representation in nearly all Arab states and most Soviet bloc and third world countries. Western European governments granted the PLO quasi-diplomatic status in their capitals and dealt with it openly, some at the highest levels.

Despite these diplomatic accomplishments, however, the PLO had come no closer to forcing Israel to withdraw from its 1967 territorial acquisitions. While the establishment of friendly links with these governments had contributed to improving the PLO's international image, they had achieved no practical gains for the Palestinians in terms of the peace process. Israel remained adamantly opposed to ceding territory to the organization or to even recognizing its legitimacy. None of the governments with which the PLO had established ties had sufficient influence over Israel to move it in that direction.

The United States did, however. Despite the perception among most Palestinians that the United States was Israel's protector, the Fatah-dominated PLO adopted the realistic approach of regarding this circumstance as an obstacle to be removed not by force, but through persuasion. The PLO hoped to secure U.S. recognition of its status as the Palestinian people's sole representative and to convince the United States government - as

other Arab states were attempting to do - of what it viewed as the need to pressure Israel into ceding territory in exchange for peace agreements. It sought to achieve this without being required to recognize Israel's right to exist or to renounce armed struggle - terrorist or otherwise - as an option for dealing with its enemy.

Thus began a long series of clandestine and informal contacts between the PLO and the United States government, in the early 1970's, in which each sought to entice the other into altering fundamental positions. The United States - mainly through private intermediaries - offered the PLO recognition in exchange for the latter's renunciation of terrorism and recognition of Israel's right to exist.

Both sides were hampered by prior commitments made to their allies and constituents, who were not yet ready to accept Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation on these terms. In exchange for total Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai, the United States had promised Israel in 1975 that it would not negotiate with the PLO until the organization had met the foregoing conditions. 'Arafat was reluctant to formally recognize Israel and to renounce terrorism without a concrete reward for these concessions,⁶¹⁵ out of fear of the strong opposition he expected to encounter from the majority of Palestinians.

⁶¹⁵ Namely, territory on which a viable and independent Palestinian state could be established.

Nevertheless, political and financial circumstances forced the PLO, Israel, and the United States to soften their positions and diminish their resolve. Media coverage of the uprising in the West Bank and Gaza, which began in late 1987, successfully portrayed Palestinian armed activity to both Israeli and international public opinion as a popular revolt and altered the commonly held perception that all Palestinians were terrorists. 'Arafat's offer nearly one year later to enter into direct negotiations with the Israeli government - based on U.N. resolutions 242 and 338 - demonstrated a stark contrast between the PLO's dominant Fatah faction and the radical groups both inside and outside the PLO, whose leaders rejected any negotiation or compromise with the Jewish state. His apparent renunciation of terrorism and recognition of Israel in December 1988 cleared the way for an open, but limited dialogue between the PLO and the United States government.

While the PLO's new position was sufficient for the United States to rescind its ban on contacts with the organization, Israel's Likud-led government under Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir remained unconvinced of the sincerity 'Arafat's renunciation. Israel's suspicion's appeared to be vindicated when 'Arafat failed to condemn a May 1990 attack by a PLO constituent group (Muhammad Abu al-'Abbas' PLF) on a crowded Tel Aviv beach, an act which terminated the United States-PLO dialogue.

The PLO's response to the 1991 Persian Gulf war between the U.S.-led alliance and Iraq placed it in an even more precarious

diplomatic position, not only with the United States, but with its most important Arab benefactors as well. Apart from the obvious result of angering the United States, the PLO's open support for Iraq against the alliance led to an immediate cutoff of financial aid by Saudi Arabia and other pro-western Gulf nations.⁶¹⁶ The organization's new-found poverty, together with the collapse of the Soviet bloc, left it with no option but to involve itself in the direct negotiations begun between Israel and its Arab counterparts in Madrid toward the end of the year.

In deference to Israel's refusal to negotiate directly with the PLO, the latter bargained with the Israelis through nominally non-PLO Palestinian West Bank and Gaza residents, reiterating its call for the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state in the territories with Jerusalem as its capital. While the Israelis were willing to accept local Palestinian control of administrative functions such as education, sanitation, and law enforcement, this fell far short of the PLO's expectations.

Although officially excluded from the negotiations, the PLO used the opportunity to show that, try as it might, Israel could not put off direct contacts with the organization for much longer. Soon after Yitzhaq Rabin's ascent to power in 1992, Israel rescinded its ban on contacts between Israelis and PLO

⁶¹⁶ The Persian Gulf Arab states are reported to have given the PLO roughly ". . . \$1.5 billion in the 11 years prior to the 1991 Gulf War." See A. Fouad, "PLO Urges Gulf Arabs to Finance Palestinian Force," Reuters, April 20, 1994. Saudi Arabia alone provided the PLO with \$85.5 million annually. "Saudi Committee Contributes 2.3 Million Dollars to the PLO," Agence France Presse, January 29, 1994.

members and in 1993, began secret talks with the PLO in order to work out a formula under which both parties could openly negotiate with one another.

By September of that year, Israel and the PLO had recognized each other and had signed a declaration of principles outlining the framework of future negotiations. Under the declaration's terms the PLO would temporarily accept authority over a limited portion of the territories (the Gaza Strip and Jericho area), after which further negotiations would be conducted to determine the area's final status. While Israel remained officially opposed to a Palestinian state, the way had been cleared for its eventual establishment.

Fatah's goal of establishing a Palestinian national authority on any territory evacuated by Israel is on the verge of being realized. While the present Palestinian national authority in Gaza and Jericho does not fully meet the demands of Palestinian secular and Islamic rejectionists (who seek Israel's disappearance as well), it appears to be the surest path to full and recognized sovereignty over at least a portion of what they consider their original homeland - a portion to which all Palestinians will have the right to return and live as citizens of their own country. Should this come to pass, Fatah's core aim will have been achieved.

Already, the PNA - under Fatah's leadership - is slowly and almost imperceptibly inching beyond the limits of its agreement with Israel, particularly with regard to the issue of Jerusalem.

While the accord which the PLO and Israel concluded in May 1994 allows Jerusalem's existing Palestinian institutions to continue to operate and postpones the question of sovereignty over the city's eastern half for later negotiations, Israel has made it clear its intention to retain all of Jerusalem under its political control. To that end, it has repeatedly warned the PNA not to extend its political authority beyond the Gaza Strip and Jericho areas and has expanded and strengthened East Jerusalem's Jewish neighborhoods. The PNA leadership is taking advantage of the intervening period, as well, to quietly strengthen - often on a piecemeal basis - its unofficial network of quasi-governmental bodies there, while openly declaring its intention to establish its political capital in Jerusalem at a later stage.

Factors such as Israel's determination to retain sovereignty over the entire city and the possible transfer of authority over the Muslim holy places to Jordan have complicated the PNA's efforts in this regard. The end-result of the negotiations over Jerusalem's future may well be an uneasy coexistence among well-entrenched Palestinian, Jordanian, and Israeli sectors, each exercising control over its own constituents and under the nominal control of an Israeli sovereign authority. While this arrangement will not likely satisfy the requirements of the Palestinian opposition factions, it will nonetheless constitute a significant achievement for the Palestinian national movement not witnessed since the beginning of the Arab-Israeli dispute.

The Fatah movement's goal - the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state - was singular, utilitarian, and straightforward. It was aimed, first and foremost, at alleviating the Palestinians' condition of homelessness and suffering. The PFLP's aspirations, on the other hand, were based primarily on the need to exact revenge on its enemies.

PFLP leaders yearned for a Palestinian state no less than their Fatah counterparts, but this had to be accomplished in a certain manner. Steeped in the writings of generations of Arab nationalists, Habash and his colleagues regarded the western nations as the eternal adversary, which they believed had sought to strip the Arab world of its wealth and resources for their own profit from time immemorial. It was the West and its Arab supporters in the region - in their view - which had supported Israel's creation and were, consequently, responsible for the Palestinians' dispersion and poverty. The West continued to support Israel as a surrogate through which it could suppress the activities of Arab nationalist groups which posed a threat to their local interests. The West and its regional allies, therefore, were no less of a threat than Israel. There could be no cooperation - and certainly no negotiation - with any of them.

For the PFLP, these ideas were far more than mere doctrine; they were immutable historical laws. In its view, the Palestinians remained dispersed due to Israel's existence. Israel continued to exist because of the support of the western nations and the acquiescence of the conservative Arab

governments. In order to return the Palestinians to their homeland, then, Israel had to be eliminated; and in order to eliminate Israel, the western governments which sustained it had to be neutralized and their client Arab regimes overthrown.

The elimination of so many enemies seemed a gargantuan task for so small an organization with limited means. The PFLP's division of the world into enemies and friends necessarily limited its sources of aid. Only ideologically compatible providers - such as the communist nations and 'progressive' Arab governments - could be approached. In the end, political circumstances proved these providers unreliable. The alliance between the PFLP's predecessor, the ANM, and 'abd al-Nasir's Egypt, was based on the former's assumption that the Egyptian government would make good on its promise to eliminate Israel. Israel's victory in 1967 over the Egyptian-led Arab military alliance and 'abd al-Nasir's attraction of Fatah forced the proto-PFLP leadership of the time to seek assistance elsewhere. Consequently, the PFLP turned to the Soviet bloc to provide it with moral and military backing against Israel and 'western capitalism'. When the Soviet Union eventually ran out of money and later collapsed, the PFLP was left to fend for itself with no alternate sources of aid.

While Fatah, in the wake of the Soviet Union's demise, could approach wealthy conservative Persian Gulf states, such as Saudi Arabia, for financial assistance, the Jordanian government for diplomatic support in its negotiations with Israel, and the

United States and the European Economic Community for financial support for the embryonic Palestinian entity in the territories, the PFLP could expect aid from none of these sources since it continued to regard them as enemies. The leadership of both the ANM and PFLP had attempted to overthrow the Jordanian and Saudi monarchies since the early 1950's and PFLP operatives had attacked western civilian targets since the late 1960's. Habash most clearly expressed his organization's attitude toward accepting financial aid from the pro-western Gulf states in an interview given to Life magazine in 1969:

I could show you that the worst obstacles have always been those placed in our path by Arab reactionaries. Like Saudi Arabia, where the majority of oil wells are in American hands. Or Lebanon, with its rotten government. Then there is Jordan, whose king is ready to recognize Israel. And the list could be extended. These are all countries with whom Al Fatah collaborates: but for us to accept money from them would mean to trample on our moral beliefs, to lose our honor. We have been collecting money among ourselves, and **if the financial problem becomes crucial we will take money away from those who have it. We will take it, not ask for it.** Those who join the Popular Front know that we are not joking. After all it is us [sic] who give the revolutionary momentum to Palestine, not Al-Fatah.⁶¹⁷

The PFLP's disregard for diplomatic convention and national sovereignty earned it a reputation among potential benefactor governments as a lawless and subversive organization; a reputation, which does not demonstrate its potential for transformation into a responsible governing authority. The PFLP

⁶¹⁷ See Fallaci, p. 34 (emphasis added).

has done little since its inception to dispel that reputation. Mutual hostility, consequently, remains high.

During the late 1960's and early 1970's, the PFLP did indeed ". . . give the revolutionary momentum to Palestine . . ." by carrying out high profile operations against airliners and other civilian targets outside the Middle East. These operations focused international media attention on the Palestinian cause, forcing western governments to reconsider their perception of Palestinians as mere refugees and to regard them as a people with legitimate claims. Having accomplished this, the PFLP should logically have become less of an underground group relying almost solely on violence and shifted its emphasis - as Fatah did - to diplomacy.

However, the primary reason for the failure of the PFLP's program was its imperfect assessment of the reasons for popular resentment toward the West. While perceptions of foreign threats to indigenous Islamic values do indeed exist at the grass-roots level, these do not necessarily extend to the economic sphere. Islamic fundamentalists, in fact, favor expanded trade with western nations as long as competing cultural values are not imposed as a result (Iran's continued commercial relations with Western Europe and Japan, for example). The PFLP's calls for economic class warfare have, therefore, become irrelevant, while calls by Islamic fundamentalist organizations for the preservation of the area's cultural and religious identity have generally been well received.

Apart from its ideology and popular appeal, however, the PFLP's ultimate fate may well be determined by events over which it has little control. The recently-concluded agreement and the continuing negotiations between Israel and Jordan only validated the PFLP's longstanding charges that an unofficial alliance has always existed between the two governments against the Palestinian nationalist movement. The PNA's haste in arranging meetings with the Jordanians to coordinate negotiating positions confirmed as well 'Arafat's role in what would be, in its view, total capitulation to Israeli and Western interests.⁶¹⁸

Despite the anger and disgust with which the PFLP greeted the Israeli-Jordanian accord, and the PNA's acquiescence thereto, the agreement alone will likely only marginally increase inter-factional Palestinian tensions - the initial Israeli-PLO agreement of September 1993 having dealt a crippling blow to any existing facade of Palestinian solidarity. More significant in exacerbating tensions between the PFLP and the PNA have been the steps which each has taken to intimidate the other and to subvert the other's program. PFLP activists in the territories have accused the PNA's internal security service of issuing death threats against them in order to intimidate them into supporting

⁶¹⁸ B. Lynfield, "Hussein, Arafat Urged to Skip Jerusalem," UPI, August 11, 1994. See also "Al-Husayni Calls for Saudi Role in Jerusalem," International Intelligence Report, August 10, 1994.

the Palestinian authority's agenda.⁶¹⁹ PNA statements on the necessity of disarming members of the Palestinian opposition groups have been met with PFLP avowals of violent resistance to such steps.⁶²⁰ The PFLP's priority, then, lies in maintaining at least a viable presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip - its primary operating arena. Concern over its steadily eroding position within the bordering Arab countries (Syria, in particular) is of secondary importance. In any case, there is very little which the PFLP can do in this regard.

In light of recent tendencies among Arab states to accept Israel's permanent presence in the Middle East, the PFLP expects little support from that quarter for its goal of destroying the Jewish state. Should efforts to conclude a peace treaty between Israel and Syria be successful, the PFLP's presence in Damascus - already low-key - may prove to be an embarrassment for the Assad government. In the event of expulsion from Syria, the PFLP would literally have nowhere to turn. Reports of secret Israeli-Iraqi diplomatic contacts (possibly as part of an Iraqi effort to reverse the policy of international sanctions against it through Israeli intervention on its behalf) have led to speculation that Iraq may soon follow Syria in concluding an agreement with Israel and that any possibility for sanctuary in that country would

⁶¹⁹ C. Murphy, "Palestinians Fear Authoritarian Trend of Leaders," International Herald Tribune, August 23, 1994. See also J. Immanuel, "Death Threats Haunt Ramallah Woman Opposed to Palestinian Authority," August 23, 1994, p. 2.

⁶²⁰ Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic, 1700 gmt, August 15, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-158, August 16, 1994, p. 7.

evaporate shortly thereafter.⁶²¹ Consequently, the PFLP has adopted the only available logical choice: temporary assent to the PNA in hopes of avoiding marginalization within the Palestinian national movement.

The PFLP, accordingly, has vowed to intensify its activity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the form of attacks on Israeli soldiers and settlers, as well as strengthening its front organizations, and participating in the PNA as an opposition

⁶²¹ H. Milhim, Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic, 1700 gmt, August 12, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-157, August 15, 1994, p. 1. Perhaps most illustrative of the 'new world order' with which the PFLP now has to contend are the reactions of its former regional allies to the arrest and extradition to France on August 15, 1994 of Illich Ramirez Sanchez ('Carlos'), who led many of the PFLP's international assassination and hostage-taking operations in the late 1960's and throughout the 1970's. Governments which (with Soviet assistance) formerly supported covert armed actions against the United States and its allies, now clamored to curry favor with the world's remaining superpower. Syria, where the PFLP is now headquartered, denied any connection with, or support for Carlos or his actions. In an interview with Radio Monte Carlo, Syrian Information Minister Dr. Muhammad Salman asserted that ". . . [w]e in Syria know nothing about him or where he used to be. Nobody has asked us to extradite him." See T. al-Imam, Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic, 2000 gmt, August 23, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-164, August 24, 1994, p. 46. Syria also ". . . initiated urgent contacts . . ." with the United States and a number of Arab and European countries denying any connection with Carlos and rejecting ". . . all forms of terrorism and extremism . . ." See Al-Sharq al-Awsat, August 23, 1994, p. 3. Yemen similarly denied any current links with him and contended that past links were never direct. See 'A. Hammudah, Al-Sharq al-Awsat, August 18, 1994, p. 1 in FBIS-NES-94-161, August 19, 1994, p. 16. The only element to criticize Sudan's decision was the PFLP, which could do very little to help its former operative. See "PFLP Blasts Sudan for Handing Carlos Over to French Authorities," Deutsche Presse-Agentur, August 17, 1994.

faction. In so doing, it seeks to maintain and extend its base of popular support in order to compete with Fatah and Hamas.⁶²²

In terms of the Palestinian movement in general, the PFLP's violent tactics and uncompromising strategy have been both beneficial and detrimental to Fatah's efforts, as the PLO's dominant faction, to legitimize Palestinian national aspirations in the international arena. On the one hand, Fatah can portray the PFLP's approach as the unpleasant alternative to political progress on the Palestinian issue. On the other hand, the PFLP's advocacy and execution of armed attacks against civilian targets has unfairly reinforced the image of all Palestinians as bloodthirsty terrorists. Even those observers who are capable of distinguishing between attitudes of Fatah and the violent Palestinian opposition are hard-pressed to explain how the PLO intends to disarm and control opponents of the peace process - a task at which it has, so far, failed miserably.⁶²³

Nevertheless, it is Fatah's flexible, single-aim approach which has brought the Palestinians closer to national sovereignty than ever before. Fatah has successfully evolved from an unknown underground organization into what is gradually becoming a legitimate and internationally recognized government. The PFLP, however, remains the perennial subversive underground

⁶²² "Palestinian Groups Agree Autonomy Will Come True," Xinhua General Overseas News Service, Item No. 0328197, March 28, 1994. See also C. Murphy, "Unity Marks New Jericho Era," International Herald Tribune, August 29, 1994.

⁶²³ N. Ha'etzni, Ma'ariv [Shabbat Supplement], June 22, 1994, pp. 14-15 in FBIS-NES-94-142, July 25, 1994, pp. 14-15.

organization, which allies itself with such diverse factions as the DFLP and Hamas. Their only common denominator seems to be an intense hatred of Israel and those who support the Arab-Israeli peace process.

B. The PFLP's Inflexibility Severely Limits Its Options

The PFLP's political outlook has changed little since its leadership first swore revenge on a multitude of enemies in the 1950's. The circumstances under which it operates, however, have. With no reliable super- or regional power to provide it with political and financial backing, the PFLP must now compete with Palestinian organizations which have either learned to adapt their strategies to new international conditions or have been fortunate enough to find a sponsor with similar ideological goals. Fatah, which has altered its methods in response to sweeping regional changes, has taken the nonviolent path to Palestinian sovereignty. Playing upon the current Israeli government's aversion to ruling over a hostile population, as well as its desire to retain political control over East Jerusalem at almost any cost, Fatah - in the form of the PNA - has been able to gradually extend its control over the remainder of the West Bank. While this process is far from over, its completion seems inevitable. In the meantime, the industrialized western nations have committed themselves - at least on paper - to providing the nascent Palestinian entity with the financial means necessary to make it economically viable. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Hamas has had to alter neither its ideology

nor its strategy, partly because of Islamic fundamentalism's widespread appeal among an angry and desperate Muslim population and partly because of the support which it receives from economically stable regional powers such as Iran.

The PFLP enjoys none of these advantages. It has from the beginning had a relationship of reciprocal hostility with the industrialized West and can expect no assistance from that quarter. Its Marxist ideology is not as popular as Islam among the general populace, nor is it as well understood. The Arab states which give sanctuary and support to groups such as the PFLP generally do so for reasons of self-interest. These organizations allow the sponsoring government - when necessary - to demonstrate support for militant Palestinian nationalism and allow it to clandestinely strike at its enemies' interests while simultaneously enabling it to deny involvement and engage them in diplomatic dialogue. Prior to 1991, Arab governments allied with the Soviet Union - primarily Syria, Iraq, and Libya - routinely sheltered such militant leftist Palestinian groups. The USSR's disolution, however, has deprived these governments of a powerful and trusted protector and forced them to attempt to ingratiate themselves with the United States - the world's remaining superpower and a potential source of financial aid. Syria, the PFLP's principal regional ally, and on whose territory its headquarters is located, is currently contemplating a peace treaty with Israel and there are rumors that Iraq - in order to persuade the international community to lift the economic

blockade imposed on it in the wake of its 1990 invasion of Kuwait - may not be far behind.⁶²⁴

In a region where the PFLP's traditional allies appear to be abandoning the Palestinian cause in its militant form, Libya remains the only Arab country which continues to openly advocate conflict with the United States and the destruction of Israel.⁶²⁵ It is, therefore, the most likely candidate to replace Syria as the radical Palestinian organizations' primary sanctuary. Although, unlike Syria, Libya is not considered immune from western aerial strikes, it has the strategic depth necessary to conceal training and supply bases for groups such as the PFLP; and unlike Iraq, Libya continues to trade with the industrialized Western European nations.

Without the Soviet Union's protection, Libya is vulnerable to diplomatic and military attack by the United States and its allies. Syria, in the past, was spared these attacks. Syrian President Hafiz al-Assad was able to establish a working relationship with the United States by virtue of his government's

⁶²⁴ M. Shahin, Jordan Times, August 10, 1994, pp. 12, 7 in FBIS-NES-94-154, August 10, 1994, pp. 32-34. See also J. al-Zayn, Interview with Mas'ud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, Al-Safir, August 2, 1994, p. 10 in FBIS-NES-94-154, August 10, 1994, pp. 35-39; Al-Muharrir, September 5, 1994, p. 7 in FBIS-NES-94-176, September 12, 1994, pp. 34-35; A. Bender et.al., Ma'ariv, September 25, 1994, p. 16 in FBIS-NES-94-186, September 26, 1994, p. 32; IDF Radio in Hebrew, 1100 gmt, September 26, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-187, September 27, 1994, p. 44.

⁶²⁵ Speech by Mu'ammarr al-Qadhdhafi at a Ceremony Marking the 1 September Revolution in Tripoli - Live, Libyan Television Network in Arabic, 1846 gmt, September 1, 1994 in FBIS-NES-94-173, September 7, 1994, pp. 27-34.

influence over the radical groups which held the nationals of western nations hostage in the 1980's and, in many cases, was able to secure their release. By allowing radical Arab organizations - including the PFLP - to operate from its territory against western interests (while claiming an inability to control their actions), Libya too has the potential to establish itself as the most effective interlocutor between the West and the anti-western militant groups. The relocation of the PFLP and similar organizations its territory will provide the Libyan government with that opportunity.

With its activity paralyzed in Syria, its presence unnoticed in Lebanon, and its influence in the PNA-controlled areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip waning further with each passing day, the PFLP must re-establish itself as an effective 'politicized combative organization' or risk fading out of existence. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, the PFLP's leadership determined that spectacular and violent operations were needed in order to draw world attention to the Palestinian cause and the civilian aircraft hijackings and embassy attacks in Western Europe which characterized the period answered this need. Now, it is the Palestinian public whose attention the PFLP believes must be focused - this time, on what the group considers the PNA's mistaken path of 'surrender' to Israel and the West. It cannot accomplish this effectively in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (hounded as its leaders there are by the PNA's internal security

apparatus) and is powerless to serve its teeming diaspora constituency from Damascus.

It is from a reorganized headquarters in Libya that the PFLP can activate its international cell network - maintained since its founding - and resume the armed attacks for which it was known its early years. Strikes against PNA, Israeli, and Western targets abroad would signal to the Palestinian diaspora that it has not been abandoned as a result of the PLO-Israeli agreement; they would signal to the Israeli government the re-emergence of an effective - and deadly - radical Palestinian opposition capable of operating out of reach of the PNA and Israeli security services; and they would warn the PNA that its cooperation with the Israeli, Western European, and United States governments can continue only at its own peril and that Israel's elimination must be the PNA's paramount aim.

Today, the PFLP's enemies are stronger than ever, its friends have all but vanished, and it has, consequently, taken its place at the fringes of Palestinian and Middle Eastern politics. To ensure its continued survival as an effective and influential actor in the Palestinian and Arab political arenas, the PFLP must once again command the world's attention. Just as its campaign of international aircraft hijackings and attacks on civilian targets in the late 1960's and early 1970's served to highlight the long-ignored condition of Palestinians in general, so too would a renewed series of armed operations against international civilian targets force the PNA leadership and the

world community to question the wisdom of rushing of negotiating an agreement with Israel at any cost. These operations are likely to find support among diaspora Palestinians - the PFLP's primary constituency - whose plight the agreement seems to have ignored. Should the PFLP adopt this strategy, it can reverse the gradual process of evanescence and restore its dominant position in the Palestinian national movement's militant wing.

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